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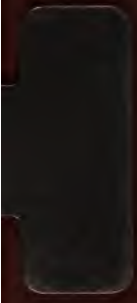
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**HARMONIES**  
**OF**  
**POLITICAL ECONOMY.**



HARMONIES  
OF  
POLITICAL ECONOMY,

BY  
FRÉDÉRIC BASTIAT.

PART II.,  
COMPRISING ADDITIONS PUBLISHED POSTHUMOUSLY,  
FROM MANUSCRIPTS LEFT BY THE AUTHOR.

TRANSLATED FROM THE THIRD EDITION OF THE FRENCH,  
WITH NOTES AND AN INDEX TO BOTH PARTS,

BY  
PATRICK JAMES STIRLING, LL.D., F.R.S.E.,  
AUTHOR OF "THE PHILOSOPHY OF TRADE," "THE GOLD DISCOVERIES, AND THEIR  
PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES," ETC.



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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE TO PART II.

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THE additions to the *Harmonies Économiques* now submitted to the English reader were written during the last illness of the author. Prior to his departure for Italy, on what he foresaw might be his last journey, he had communicated to his friends, MM. de Fontenay and Paillottet, a list of the new chapters, in the order in which they will be found in the Notice of his Life and Writings prefixed to Part I.\* To the same friends, in his last moments, he intrusted the manuscripts intended for the continuation of the work, leaving to them the task of selection and arrangement. The duty thus committed to them they discharged very judiciously, by arranging the new portions in the order pointed out, without altering the text, and, except in a very few instances, without additions of their own ; contenting themselves with adding some explanatory notes, consisting chiefly of references to the author's other works.

Some of the chapters are unfortunately mere fragments, but most of the others indicate very clearly Bastiat's opinions on the subjects to which they relate ; and several of them—especially the chapters on Public and Private Services, Responsibility, Solidarity, Social Motive Force, and portions of others, which treat of what he has elsewhere called Social Harmonies, or Political Economy in its relations with Social Philosophy—display a breadth, a vigour, and an originality worthy of the best days of their lamented author.

Many of the questions purely economical which are here discussed,—such, for instance, as those of Wages, Population, and the

\* NOTICE, etc., p. xxxviii., note.

relations of Labour and Capital, etc.,—are at this moment deeply engaging public attention in England, as well as on the other side of the Channel; and on subjects of such vast practical importance it is surely desirable that the opinions of so profound and fearless a thinker as Bastiat should be as widely disseminated as possible.

Having now completed the English edition of the *Harmonies Économiques*, I may perhaps be permitted to refer to the great interest taken in the translation by the late Mr Cobden, who was the correspondent and personal friend of Bastiat, and was, I need not say, so eminently qualified to form and pronounce an opinion on the merits of his last great work. A short time after the appearance of Part I. (26th March 1860), writing from Paris, where he was then engaged in negotiating the Commercial Treaty, Mr Cobden says:—

“My enthusiasm for Bastiat, founded as much on a love of his personal qualities as on an admiration for his genius, dates back nearly twenty years; I need not, therefore, express any astonishment at the warmth with which you speak of his productions. They are doing their work silently but effectually. M. Guillaumin [the eminent publisher] tells me the sale of the last edition has been steady and continuous, and a new one is now in hand. The works of Bastiat, which are selling not only in France, but throughout Europe, are gradually teaching those who by their commanding talents are capable of becoming the teachers of others; for Bastiat speaks with the greatest force to the highest order of intellects. At the same time, he is almost the only Political Economist whose style is brilliant and fascinating, whilst his irresistible logic is relieved by sallies of wit and humour which make his *Sophismes* as amusing as a novel. No critic who has read Bastiat will dare to apply again to Political Economy the sarcastic epithet of the ‘dreary science.’ His fame is so well established, that I think it would be presumptuous to do anything to increase it by any other means than the silent but certain dissemination of his works by the force of their own great merits.”

A General Index has now been added, which will facilitate reference to both parts of the work.

P. J. S.

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HARMONIES  
OF  
POLITICAL ECONOMY.

PART II.

---

XI.

PRODUCER—CONSUMER.

---

IF the level of the human race is not continually rising, man is not a perfectible being.

If the social tendency is not a constant approximation of all men towards this progressive elevation, the economic laws are not harmonious.

Now, how can the level of humanity be rising, if each given quantity of labour does not yield a constantly increasing amount of enjoyments, a phenomenon which can be explained only by the transformation of onerous into gratuitous utility?

And, on the other hand, how can this utility, having become gratuitous, bring men nearer and nearer to a common level, if the utility has not at the same time itself become common?

Here, then, we discover the essential law of social harmony.

I should have been pleased had the language of Political Economy furnished me with two words other than the terms *production* and *consumption*, to designate services which are rendered and received. These terms savour too much of materiality. There are evidently services, like those of the clergyman, the professor, the soldier, the artist, which tend to the furtherance of morality, education, security, taste, which have nothing in common with mechanical or manu-

facturing industry, except this, that the end to be attained is *satisfaction* or enjoyment.

The terms I have referred to are those generally employed, and I have no wish to become a neologist. But let it be understood that by *production* I mean what confers utility, and by *consumption* the enjoyment to which that utility gives rise.

Let the protectionist school—which is in reality a phase of Communism—believe that in employing the terms *producer* and *consumer* we are not absurd enough to wish to represent the human race as divided into two distinct classes, the one engaged exclusively in the work of producing, the other exclusively in that of consuming. The naturalist divides the human race into whites and blacks, or into men and women, and the economist, forsooth, is not to classify them as producers and consumers, because, as the protectionist gentlemen sagely remark, *producer and consumer make but one person!*

Why, it is for the very reason that they do make but one that each individual comes to be considered by the science of Political Economy in this double capacity. Our business is not to divide the human race into two classes, but to study man under two very different aspects. If the protectionists were to forbid grammarians to employ the pronouns *I* and *thou*, on the pretext that every man is in turn *the person speaking* and *the person spoken to*, it would be a sufficient answer to say, that although it be perfectly true that we cannot place all the tongues on one side, and all the ears on the other, since every man has both ears and a tongue, it by no means follows that, with reference to each proposition enunciated, the tongue does not pertain to one man and the ear to another. In the same way, *with reference to every service*, the man who renders it is quite distinct from the man who receives it. The producer and consumer are always set opposite each other, so much so that they have always a controversy.

The very people who object to our studying mankind under the double aspect of producers and consumers have no difficulty in making this distinction when they address themselves to legislative assemblies. We then find them demanding monopoly or freedom of trade, according as the matter in dispute refers to a commodity which they sell, or a commodity which they purchase.

Without dwelling longer, then, on this preliminary exception taken by the protectionists, let us acknowledge that in the social order the separation of employments causes each man to occupy

two situations, sufficiently distinct to render their action and relations worthy of our study.

In general, we devote ourselves to some special trade, profession, or career, and it is not from that particular source that we expect to derive our satisfactions. We render and receive services; we supply and demand values; we make purchases and sales; we work for others, and others work for us: in short, we are *producers and consumers*.

According as we present ourselves in the market in one or other of these capacities, we carry thither a spirit which is very different, or rather, I should say, very opposite. Suppose, for example, that corn is the subject of the transaction. The same man has very different views when he goes to market as a purchaser, from what he has when he goes there as a seller. As a purchaser, he desires abundance; as a seller, scarcity. In either case, these desires may be traced to the same source—personal interest; but as to sell or buy, to give or to receive, to supply or to demand, are acts as opposite as possible, they cannot but give rise, and from the same motive, to opposite desires.

Antagonistic desires cannot at one and the same time coincide with the general good.

In another work,\* I have endeavoured to show that the wishes or desires of men in their capacity of consumers are those which are in harmony with the public interest; and it cannot be otherwise. For seeing that enjoyment is the end and design of labour, and that the labour is determined only by the obstacle to be overcome, it is evident that labour is in this sense an *evil*, and that everything should tend to diminish it; that enjoyment is a *good*, and that everything should tend to increase it.

And here presents itself the great, the perpetual, the deplorable illusion which springs from the erroneous definition of *value*, and from confounding value with *utility*.

Value being simply a relation, is of as much greater importance to each individual as it is of less importance to society at large.

What renders service to the masses is utility alone; and value is not at all the measure of it.

What renders service to the individual is still only utility. But value is the measure of it; for, with each determinate value, he obtains from society the utility of his choice, in the proportion of that value.

\* *Sophismes Economiques*, chap. i. (1st series).



If we regard man as an isolated being, it is as clear as day that consumption, and not production, is the essential thing; for consumption to a certain extent implies labour, but labour does not imply consumption.

The separation of employments has led certain economists to measure the general prosperity, not by consumption, but by labour. And by following these economists we have come to this strange subversion of principle, to favour labour at the expense of its results.

The reasoning has been this: The more difficulties are overcome the better. Then augment the difficulties to be conquered.

The error of this reasoning is manifest.

No doubt, a certain amount of difficulties being given, it is fortunate that a certain quantity of labour also given should surmount as many of these difficulties as possible. But to diminish the power of the labour or augment that of the difficulties, in order to increase value, is positively monstrous.

An individual member of society is interested in this, that his services, while preserving even the same degree of utility, should increase in value. Suppose his desires in this respect to be realized, it is easy to perceive what will happen. He is better off, but his brethren are worse off, seeing that the total amount of utility has not been increased.

We cannot then reason from particulars to generals, and say: Pursue such measures as in their result will satisfy the desire which all individuals entertain to see the value of their services augmented.

Value being a relation, we should have accomplished nothing if the increase in all departments were proportionate to the anterior value; if it were arbitrary and unequal for different services, we should have done nothing but introduce injustice into the distribution of utilities.

It is of the nature of every bargain or mercantile transaction to give rise to a *debate*. But by using this word debate, shall I not bring down upon myself all the sentimental schools which are nowadays so numerous? *Debate* implies *antagonism*, it will be said. You admit, then, that antagonism is the natural state of society. Here again I have to break another lance; for in this country economic science is so little understood, that one cannot make use of a word without raising up an opponent.

I have been justly reproached for using the phrase that "Between

the seller and buyer there exists a radical antagonism." The word *antagonism*, when strengthened by the word *radical*, implies much more than I meant to express. It would seem to imply a permanent opposition of interests, consequently an indestructible social dissonance; while what I wished to indicate was merely that transient debate or discussion which precedes every commercial transaction, and which is inherent in the very idea of a bargain.

As long as, to the regret of the sentimental utopist, there shall remain a vestige of liberty in the world, buyers and sellers will discuss their interests, and higggle about prices; nor will the social laws cease to be harmonious on that account. Is it possible to conceive that the man who *offers* and the man who *demand*s a service should meet each other in the market without having for the moment a different idea of its *value*? Is that to set the world on fire? Must all commercial transactions, all exchanges, all barter, all liberty, be banished from this earth, or are we to allow each of the contracting parties to defend his position, and urge and put forward his motives? It is this very free debate or discussion which gives rise to the equivalence of services and the equity of transactions. By what other means can our system-makers ensure this equity which is so desirable? Would they by legislation trammel the liberty of one of the parties only? Then the one must be in the power of the other. Would they take away from both the liberty of managing their own affairs, under the pretext that they ought henceforth to buy and sell on the principle of fraternity? Let me tell the Socialists that it is here their absurdity becomes apparent, for, in the long-run, these interests must be regulated and adjusted. Is the discussion to be inverted, the purchaser taking the part of the seller, and *vice versa*? Such transactions would be very diverting, we must allow. "Please, sir, give me only 10 francs for this cloth." "What say you? I will give you 20 for it." "But, my good sir, it is worth nothing—it is out of fashion—it will be worn out in a fortnight," says the merchant. "It is of the best quality, and will last two winters," replies the customer. "Very well, sir, to please you, I will add 5 francs—this is all the length that fraternity will allow me to go." "It is against my Socialist principles to pay less than 20 francs, but we must learn to make sacrifices, and I agree." Thus this whimsical transaction will just arrive at the ordinary result, and our system-makers will regret to see accursed liberty still surviving, although turned upside down and engendering a new antagonism.

That is not what we want, say the *organisateurs*; what we desire is liberty. Then, what would you be at? for services must still be exchanged, and conditions adjusted. We expect that the care of adjusting them should be left to us. I suspected as much. . . .

Fraternity! bond of brotherhood, sacred flame kindled by heaven in man's soul, how has thy name been abused! In thy name all freedom has been stifled. In thy name a new despotism, such as the world had never before seen, has been erected; and we are at length driven to fear that the very name of fraternity, after being thus sullied, and having served as the rallying cry of so many incapables, the mask of so much ambition, and proud contempt of human dignity, should end by losing altogether its grand and noble significance.

Let us no longer, then, aim at overturning everything, domineering over everything and everybody, and withdrawing all—men and things—from the operation of natural laws. Let us leave the world as God has made it. Let us, poor scribblers, not imagine ourselves anything else than observers, more or less exact, of what is passing around us. Let us no longer render ourselves ridiculous by pretending to change human nature, as if we were ourselves beyond humanity and its errors and weaknesses. Let us leave producers and consumers to take care of their own interests, and to arrange and adjust these interests by honest and peaceful conventions. Let us confine ourselves to the observation of relations, and the effects to which they give rise. This is precisely what I am about to do, keeping always in view this general law, which I apprehend to be the law of human society, namely, the gradual equalization of individuals and of classes, combined with general progress.

A line no more resembles a force or a velocity, than it does a value or a utility. Mathematicians, nevertheless, make use of diagrams; and why should not the economist do the same?

We have values which are equal, values the mutual relations of which are known as the half, the quarter, double, triple, etc. There is nothing to prevent our representing these differences by lines of various lengths.

But the same thing does not hold with reference to *utility*. General utility, as we have seen, may be resolved into gratuitous utility and onerous utility, the former due to the action of nature, the latter the result of human labour. This last being capable of being estimated and measured, may be represented by a line of

determinate length ; but the other is not susceptible of estimation or of measurement. No doubt in the production of a measure of wheat, of a cask of wine, of an ox, of a stone of wool, a ton of coals, a bundle of faggots, nature does much. But we have no means of measuring this natural co-operation of forces, most of which are unknown to us, and which have been in operation since the beginning of time. Nor have we any interest in doing so. We may represent gratuitous utility, then, by an indefinite line.

Now, let there be two products, the *value* of the one being double that of the other, they may be represented by these lines :—

I	A	B
.....	-----	-----
I	C	D
.....	-----	-----

IB, ID, represent the total product, general utility, what satisfies man's wants, absolute wealth.

IA, IC, the co-operation of nature, gratuitous utility, the part which belongs to the domain of community.

AB, CD, human service, onerous utility, *value*, relative wealth, the part which belongs to the domain of property.

I need not say that AB, which you may suppose, if you will, to represent a house, a piece of furniture, a book, a song sung by Jenny Lind, a horse, a bale of cloth, a consultation of physicians, etc., will exchange for twice CD, and that the two men who effect the exchange will give into the bargain, and without even being aware of it, the one, once IA, the other twice IC.

Man is so constituted that his constant endeavour is to diminish the proportion of effort to result, to substitute the action of nature for his own action; in a word, to accomplish more with less. This is the constant aim of his skill, his intelligence, and his energy.

Let us suppose then that John, the producer of IB, discovers a process by means of which he accomplishes his work with one-half the labour which it formerly cost him, taking everything into account, even the construction of the instrument by means of which he avails himself of the co-operation of nature.

As long as he preserves his secret, we shall have no change in the figures we have given above; AB and CD will represent the same values, the same relations; for John alone of all the world being acquainted with the improved process, he will turn it exclu-

sively to his own profit and advantage. He will take his ease for half the day, or else he will make, each day, twice the quantity of IB, and his labour will be better remunerated. The discovery he has made is for the good of mankind, but mankind in this case is represented by one man.

And here let us remark, in passing, how fallacious is the axiom of the English Economists that *value comes from labour*, if thereby it is intended to represent *value* and *labour* as proportionate. Here we have the labour diminished by one-half, and yet no change in the value. This is what constantly happens, and why? Because the service is the same. Before as after the discovery, as long as it is a secret, he who gives or transfers IB renders the same service. But things will no longer be in the same position when Peter, the producer of ID, is enabled to say, "You ask me for two hours of my labour in exchange for one hour of yours; but I have found out your process, and if you set so high a price on your service, I shall serve myself."

Now this day must necessarily come. A process once realized is not long a mystery. Then the value of the product IB will fall by one-half, and we shall have these two figures.

I	A	A'	B
.....			_____
I		C	D
.....			_____

AA' represent value annihilated, relative wealth which has disappeared, property become common, utility formerly onerous, now gratuitous.

For, as regards John, who here represents the producer, he is reinstated in his former condition. With the same effort which it cost him formerly to produce IB, he can now produce twice as much. In order to obtain twice ID, we see him constrained to give twice IB, or what IB represents, be it furniture, books, houses, or what it may.

Who profits by all this? Clearly Peter, the producer of ID, who here represents consumers in general, including John himself. If, in fact, John desires to consume his own product, he profits by the saving of time represented by the suppression of AA'. As regards Peter, that is to say as regards consumers in general, they can now purchase IB with half the expenditure of time, effort,

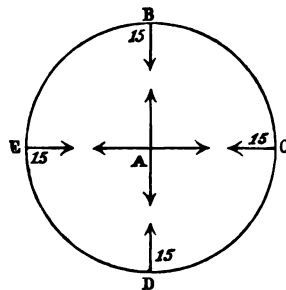
labour, value, compared with what it would have cost them before the intervention of natural forces. These forces, then, are gratuitous, and, moreover, common.

Since I have ventured to illustrate my argument by geometrical figures, perhaps I may be permitted to give another example, and I shall be happy if by this method—somewhat whimsical, I allow, as applied to Political Economy—I can render more intelligible to the reader the phenomena which I wish to describe.

As a producer, or as a consumer, every man may be considered as a centre, from whence radiate the services which he renders, and to which tend the services which he receives in exchange.

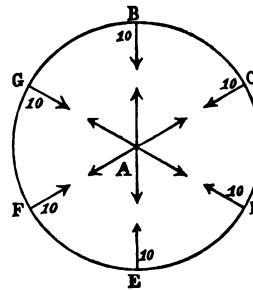
Suppose then that there is placed at A (Fig. 1) a producer, a copyist, for example, or transcriber of manuscripts, who here represents all producers, or production in general. He furnishes to society four manuscripts. If at the present moment the *value* of each of these manuscripts is equal to 15, he renders services equal to 60, and receives an equal value, variously spread over a multitude of services. To simplify the demonstration, I suppose only four of them, proceeding from four points of the circumference BCDE.

Fig. 1.



Value produced = 60  
Value received = 60  
Utility produced = 4

Fig. 2.



Value produced = 60  
Value received = 60  
Utility produced = 6

This man, we now suppose, discovers the art of printing. He can thenceforth produce in 40 hours what formerly would have cost him 60. Admit that competition forces him to reduce proportionally the price of his books, and that in place of being worth 15, they are now worth only 10. But then in place of four our workman can now produce six books. On the other hand, the fund of remuneration proceeding from the circumference, amount-

ing to 60, has not changed. There is remuneration for six books, worth 10 each, just as there was formerly remuneration for four manuscripts, each worth 15.

This, let me remark briefly, is what is always lost sight of in discussing the question of machinery, of free-trade, and of progress in general. Men see the labour set free and rendered disposable by the expeditive process, and they become alarmed. They do not see that a corresponding proportion of remuneration is rendered disposable also by the same circumstance.

The new transactions we have supposed are represented by Fig. 2, where we see radiate from the centre A, a total value of 60, spread over six books, in place of four manuscripts. From the circumference still proceeds a value, equal to 60, necessary now as formerly, to make up the balance.

Who then has gained by the change? As regards *value*, no one. As regards real wealth, positive satisfactions, the countless body of consumers ranged round the circumference. Each of them can now purchase a book with an amount of labour reduced by one-third. But the consumers are the human race. For observe that A himself, if he gains nothing in his capacity of producer,—if he is obliged, as formerly, to perform 60 hours' labour in order to obtain the old remuneration,—nevertheless, in as far as he is a consumer of books, gains exactly as others do. Like them, if he desires to read, he can procure this enjoyment with an economy of labour equal to one-third.

But if, in his character of producer, he finds himself at length deprived of the profit of his own inventions, by competition, where in that case is his compensation?

His compensation consists, *1st*, in this, that as long as he was able to preserve his secret, he continued to sell 15 of what he produced at the cost of 10; *2dly*, In this, that he obtains books for his own use at a smaller cost, and thus participates in the advantages he has procured for society. But, *3dly*, His compensation consists above all in this, that just in the same way as he has been forced to impart to his fellow-men the benefit of his own progress, he benefits by the progress of his fellow-men.

Just as the progress accomplished by A has profited B, C, D, E, the progress realized by B, C, D, E has profited A. By turns A finds himself at the centre and at the circumference of universal industry, for he is by turns producer and consumer. If B, for example, is a cotton-spinner who has introduced improved ma-

chinery, the profit will redound to A as well as to C, D. If C is a mariner who has replaced the oar by the sail, the economy of labour will profit B, A, E.

In short, the whole mechanism reposes on this law :—

Progress benefits the producer, as such, only during the time necessary to recompense his skill. It soon produces a fall of value, and leaves to the first imitators a fair, but small, recompense.

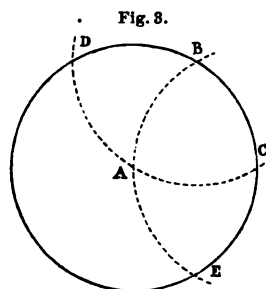
At length value becomes proportioned to the diminished labour, and the whole saving accrues to society at large.

Thus all profit by the progress of each, and each profits by the progress of all. The principle, *each for all, all for each*, put forward by the Socialists, and which they would have us receive as a novelty, the germ of which is to be discovered in their organizations founded on oppression and constraint, God himself has given us ; and He has educed it from liberty.

God, I say, has given us this principle, and He has not established it in a model community, presided over by M. Considérant, or in a *Phalanstère* of six hundred *harmoniens*, or in a tentative *Icaria*,\* on condition that a few fanatics should submit themselves to the arbitrary power of a monomaniac, and that the faithless should pay for the true believers. No, God has established the principle *each for all and all for each* generally, universally, by a marvellous mechanism, in which justice, liberty, utility, and sociability are mingled and reconciled in such a degree as ought to discourage these manufacturers of social organizations.

Observe that this great law of *each for all and all for each* is much more universal than my demonstration supposes it. Words are dull and heavy, and the pen still more so. The writer is obliged to exhibit successively, and one after the other, with despairing slowness, phenomena which recommend themselves to our admiration only in the aggregate.

Thus, I have just spoken of *inventions*. You might conclude that this was the only case in which progress, once attained, escapes from the producer, and goes to enlarge the common fund of mankind. It is not so. It is a general law that every advantage of whatever kind, proceeding from local situation, climate, or any



\* Allusion to Socialist works. See Part I., p. 176.



other liberality of nature, slips rapidly from the hands of the person who first discovered and appropriated it—not on that account to be lost, but to go to feed the vast reservoir from which the enjoyments of mankind are derived. One condition alone is attached, which is, that labour and transactions should be free. To run counter to liberty is to run counter to the designs of Providence; it is to suspend the operation of God's law, and limit progress in a double sense.

What I have just said with reference to the transfer of advantages holds equally true of evils and disadvantages. Nothing remains permanently with the producer—neither advantages nor inconveniences. Both tend to disseminate themselves through society at large.

We have just seen with what avidity the producer seeks to avail himself of whatever may facilitate his work; and we have seen, too, in how short a time the profit arising from inventions and discoveries slips from the inventor's hands. It seems as if that profit were not in the hands of a superior intelligence, but of a blind and obedient instrument of general progress.

With the same ardour he shuns all that can shackle his action; and this is a happy thing for the human race, for it is to mankind at large that in the long-run obstacles are prejudicial. Suppose, for example, that A, the producer of books, is subjected to a heavy tax. He must add the amount of that tax to the price of his books. It will enter into the value of the books as a constituent part, the effect of which will be that B, C, D, E must give more labour in exchange for the same satisfaction. Their compensation will consist in the purpose to which Government applies the tax. If the use to which it is applied is beneficial, they may gain instead of losing by the arrangement. If it is employed to oppress them, they will suffer in a double sense. But as far as A is concerned, he is relieved of the tax, although he pays it in the first instance.

I do not mean to say that the producer does not frequently suffer from obstacles of various kinds, and from taxes among others. Sometimes he suffers most seriously from the operation of taxes, and it is precisely on that account that taxes tend to shift their incidence, and to fall ultimately on the masses.

Thus, in France, wine has been subjected to a multitude of exactions. And then a system has been introduced which restricts its sale abroad.

It is curious to observe what skips and bounds such burdens

make in passing from the producer to the consumer. No sooner has the tax or restriction begun to operate than the producer endeavours to indemnify himself. But the *demand* of the consumers, as well as the supply of wine, remaining the same, the price cannot rise. The producer gets no more for his wine after, than he did before, the imposition of the tax. And as before the tax he received no more than an ordinary and adequate price, determined by services freely exchanged, he finds himself a loser by the whole amount of the tax. To cause the price to rise, he is obliged to diminish the quantity of wine produced.\* . . . . .

The consumer, then,—the public,—is relatively to the loss or profit which affects in the first instance certain classes of producers what the earth is to electricity—the great common reservoir. All proceeds from it, and after some detours, longer or shorter as the case may be, and after having given rise to certain phenomena more or less varied, all returns to it again.

We have just shown that the economic effects only glance upon the producer, so to speak, on their way to the consumer, and that consequently all great and important questions of this kind must be regarded from the consumer's point of view if we wish to make ourselves masters of their general and permanent consequences.

This subordination of the interests of the producer to that of the consumer, which we have deduced from the consideration of *utility*, is fully confirmed when we advert to the consideration of *morality*.

Responsibility, in fact, always rests with the initiative. Now where is the initiative? In *demand*.

*Demand* (which implies the means of remuneration) determines all—the direction of capital and of labour, the distribution of population, the morality of professions, etc. *Demand* answers to Desire, while *Supply* answers to Effort. Desire is reasonable or unreasonable, moral or immoral. Effort, which is only an effect, is morally neuter, or has only a reflected morality.

Demand or Consumption says to the producer, "Make that for me." The producer obeys. And this would be evident in every case if the producer always and everywhere waited for the demand.

But in practice this is not the case.

Is it exchange which has led to the division of labour, or the

\* See the author's discourse *Sur l'Impôt des Boissons*, in the second edition of the pamphlet entitled *Incompatibilités Parlementaires*.—EDITOR.

division of labour which has given rise to exchange? This is a subtle and thorny question. Let us say that man makes exchanges because, being intelligent and sociable, he comprehends that this is one means of increasing the proportion of result to effort. That which results exclusively from the division of labour and from foresight, is that a man does not wait for a specific request to work for another. Experience teaches him tacitly that demand exists.

He makes the effort beforehand which is to satisfy the demand, and this gives rise to trades and professions. Beforehand he makes shoes, hats, etc., or prepares himself to sing, to teach, to plead, to fight, etc. But is it really the supply which precedes the demand, and determines it?

No. It is because there is a sufficient certainty that these different services will be demanded that men prepare to render them, although they do not always know precisely from what quarter the demand may come. And the proof of it is, that the relation between these different services is sufficiently well known, that their value has been so widely tested that one may devote himself with some security to a particular manufacture, or embrace a particular career.

The impulse of demand is then pre-existent, seeing that one may calculate the intensity of it with so much precision.

Moreover, when a man betakes himself to a particular trade or profession, and sets himself to produce commodities, about what is he solicitous? Is it about the utility of the article which he manufactures, or its results, good or bad, moral or immoral? Not at all; he thinks only of its *value*. It is the demander who looks to the *utility*. Utility answers to his want, his desire, his caprice. Value, on the contrary, has relation only to the effort made, to the service transferred. It is only when, by means of exchange, the producer in his turn becomes the demander that utility is looked to. When I resolve to manufacture hats rather than shoes, I do not ask myself the question, whether men have a greater interest in protecting their heads or their heels. No, that concerns the demander, and determines the demand. The demand in its turn determines the value, or the degree of esteem in which the public holds the service. Value, in short, determines the effort or the supply.

Hence result some very remarkable consequences in a moral point of view. Two nations may be equally furnished with values, that is to say, with relative wealth (see Part I., chap. vi.), and very unequally provided with real utilities, or absolute wealth; and this happens when one of them forms desires which are more unreasonable

than those of the other—when the one considers its real wants, and the other creates for itself wants which are factitious or immoral.

Among one people a taste for education may predominate ; among another a taste for good living. In such circumstances we render a service to the first when we have something to teach them ; to the other, when we please their palate.

Now, services are remunerated according to the degree of importance we attach to them. If we do not exchange, if we render these services to ourselves, what should determine us if not the nature and intensity of our desires ?

In one of the countries we have supposed, professors and teachers will abound ; in the other, cooks.

In both, the services exchanged may be equal in the aggregate, and may consequently represent equal values, or equal relative wealth, but not the same absolute wealth. In other words, the one employs its labour well, and the other employs it ill.

And as regards satisfactions the result will be this ; that the one people will have much instruction, and the other good dinners. The ultimate consequences of this diversity of tastes will have considerable influence not only upon real, but upon relative wealth ; for education may develop new means of rendering services, which good dinners never can.

We remark among nations a prodigious diversity of tastes, arising from their antecedents, their character, their opinions, their vanity, etc.

No doubt there are some wants so imperious (hunger and thirst, for example) that we regard them as determinate quantities. And yet it is not uncommon to see a man scrimp himself of food in order to have good clothes, while another never thinks of his dress until his appetite is satisfied. The same thing holds of nations.

But these imperious wants once satisfied, everything else depends greatly on the will. It becomes an affair of taste, and in that region morality and good sense have much influence.

The intensity of the various national desires determines always the quantity of labour which each people subtracts from the aggregate of its efforts in order to satisfy each of its desires. An Englishman must, above all things, be well fed. For this reason he devotes an enormous amount of his labour to the production of food, and if he produces any other commodities, it is with the intention of exchanging them abroad for alimentary substances.

The quantity of corn, meat, butter, milk, sugar, etc., consumed in England is frightful. A Frenchman desires to be amused. He delights in what pleases his eye, and in frequent changes. His labours are in accordance with his tastes. Hence we have in France multitudes of singers, mountebanks, milliners, elegant shops, coffee-rooms, etc. In China, the natives dream away life agreeably under the influence of opium, and this is the reason why so great an amount of their national labour is devoted to procuring this precious narcotic, either by direct production, or indirectly by means of exchange. In Spain, where the pomp of religious worship is carried to so great a height, the exertions of the people are bestowed on the decoration of churches, etc.

I shall not go the length of asserting that there is no immorality in services which pander to immoral and depraved desires. But the immoral principle is obviously in the desire itself.

That would be beyond doubt were man living in a state of isolation; and it is equally true as regards man in society, for society is only individuality enlarged.

Who then would think of blaming our labourers in the south of France for producing brandy? They satisfy a *demand*. They dig their vineyards, dress their vines, gather and distil the grapes, without concerning themselves about the use which will be made of the product. It is for the man who seeks the enjoyment to consider whether it is proper, moral, rational, or productive of good. The responsibility rests with him. The business of the world could be conducted on no other footing. Is the tailor to tell his customer that he cannot make him a coat of the fashion he wants because it is extravagant, or because it prevents his breathing freely, etc., etc.?

Then what concern is it of our poor vine-dressers if rich diners-out in London indulge too freely in claret? Or can we seriously accuse the English of raising opium in India with the deliberate intention of poisoning the Chinese?

A frivolous people requires frivolous manufactures, just as a serious people requires industry of a more serious kind. If the human race is to be improved, it must be by the improved morality of the consumer, not of the producer.

This is the design of religion in addressing the rich—the great *consumers*—so seriously on their immense responsibility. From another point of view, and employing a different language, Political Economy arrives at the same conclusion, when she affirms that we

cannot check the *supply* of any commodity which is in *demand*; that as regards the producer, the commodity is simply a *value*, a sort of current coin which represents nothing either good or evil, whilst it is in the intention of the consumer that *utility*, or moral or immoral enjoyment, is to be discovered; consequently, that it is incumbent on the man who manifests the desire or makes the demand for the commodity to weigh the consequences, whether useful or hurtful, and to answer before God and man for the good or bad direction which he impresses upon industry.

Thus from whatever point of view we regard the subject, we see clearly that consumption is the great end of Political Economy; and that good and evil, morality and immorality, harmonies and dissonances, all come to centre in the consumer, for he represents mankind at large.

## XII.

### THE TWO APHORISMS.

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MODERN moralists who oppose the maxim, *Chacun pour tous, tous pour chacun*, to the old proverb, *Chacun pour soi, chacun chez soi*, have formed a very incomplete, and for that reason a very false, and, I would add, a very melancholy idea of Society.

Let us eliminate, in the first place, from these two celebrated sayings what is superfluous. *All for each* is a redundancy, introduced from love of antithesis, for it is expressly included in *each for all*. As regards the saying *chacun chez soi*, the idea has no direct relation with the others; but, as it is of great importance in Political Economy, we shall make it hereafter the subject of inquiry.

It remains for us to consider the assumed opposition between these two members of the adages we have quoted, namely, *each for all*—*each for himself*. The one, it is said, expresses the sympathetic principle, the other the individualist or selfish principle. The first unites, the second divides.

Now, if we refer exclusively to the motive which determines the effort, the opposition is incontestable. But I maintain that if we consider the aggregate of human efforts in their results, the case is different. Examine Society, as it actually exists, obeying, as regards services which are capable of remuneration, the individualist or selfish principle; and you will be at once convinced that every man in working *for himself* is in fact working *for all*. This is beyond doubt. If the reader of these lines exercises a profession or trade, I entreat him for a moment to turn his regards upon himself; and I would ask him whether all his labours have not the satisfaction of others for their object, and, on the other hand, whether it is not to the exertions of others that he himself owes all his satisfactions.

It is evident that they who assert that *each for himself* and *each*

*for all* are contradictory, conceive that an incompatibility exists between individualism and association. They think that *each for himself* implies isolation, or a tendency to isolation; that personal interest divides men, in place of uniting them, and that this principle tends to that of *each by himself*, that is to say, to the absence of all social relations.

In taking this view, I repeat, they form a false, because incomplete idea of society. Even when moved only by personal interest, men seek to draw nearer each other, to combine their efforts, to unite their forces, to work for one another, to render reciprocal services, to *associate*. It would not be correct to say that they act in this way in spite of self-interest; they do so in obedience to self-interest. They *associate* because they find their account in it. If they did not find it for their advantage, they would not associate. Individualism, then, or a regard to personal interest, performs the work which the sentimentalists of our day would confide to Fraternity, to self-sacrifice, or some other motive opposed to self-love. And this just establishes the conclusion at which we never fail to arrive—that Providence has provided for the social state much better than the men can who call themselves its prophets. For of two things one; either union is injurious to individuality, or it is advantageous to it. If it injures it, what are the Socialist gentlemen to do, how can they manage, and what rational motive can they have to bring about a state of things which is hurtful to everybody? If, on the contrary, union is advantageous, it will be brought about by the action of personal interest, which is the strongest, the most permanent, the most uniform, the most universal, of all motives, let men say what they will.

Just look at how the thing actually works in practice. A *squatter* goes away to clear a field in the *Far West*. Not a day passes without his experiencing the difficulties which isolation creates. A second squatter now makes his way to the desert. Where does he pitch his tent? Does he retire *naturally* to a distance from the first? No; he draws near to him *naturally*—and why? Because he knows all the advantages that men derive, with equal exertion, from the very circumstance of proximity. He knows that on various occasions they can accommodate each other by lending and borrowing tools and instruments, by uniting their action, by conquering difficulties insurmountable by individual exertion, by creating reciprocally a market for produce, by interchanging their views and opinions, and by providing for their



common safety. A third, a fourth, a fifth squatter penetrates into the desert, and is invariably attracted by the smoke of the first settlements. Other people will then step in with larger capital, knowing that they will find hands there ready to be set to work. A colony is formed. They change somewhat the mode of culture; they form a path to the highway, by which the mail passes; they import and export; construct a church, a school-house, etc., etc. In a word, the power of the colonists is augmented by the very fact of their proximity, and to such a degree as to exceed, to an incalculable extent, the sum of their isolated and individual forces; and this is the motive which has attracted them towards each other.

But it may be said that *every man for himself* is a frigid maxim, which all the reasoning and paradoxes in the world cannot render otherwise than repugnant; that it smells of egotism a mile off, and that egotism is more than an evil in society, being itself the source of most other evils.

Now, listen a little, if you please.

If the maxim *every man for himself* is understood in this sense, that it is to regulate all our thoughts, acts, and relations, that we are to find it at the root of all our family and domestic affections, as fathers, sons, brothers, husbands, friends, citizens, or rather that it is to repress and to extinguish these affections, then I admit that it is frightful, horrible, and such, that were there one man upon the earth heartless enough to make it the rule of his conduct, that man dared not even proclaim it in theory.

But will the Socialists, in the teeth of fact and experience, always refuse to admit that there are two orders of human relations—one dependent on the sympathetic principle, and which we leave to the domain of morals,—another springing from self-interest, and regulating transactions between men who know nothing of each other, and owe each other nothing but justice,—transactions regulated by voluntary covenants freely adjusted? Covenants of this last species are precisely those which come within the domain of Political Economy. It is, in truth, no more possible to base commercial transactions on the principle of sympathy, than it is to base family and friendly relations on self-interest. To the Socialists I shall never cease to address this remonstrance: You wish to mix up two things which cannot be confounded. If you were fools enough to wish to confound them, you have not the power to do it. The blacksmith, the carpenter, and the labourer, who exhaust their strength in rude avocations, may be excellent fathers, admir-

able sons; they may have the moral sense thoroughly developed, and carry in their breasts hearts of large and expansive sympathy. In spite of all that, you will never persuade them to labour from morning to night with the sweat of their brow, and impose upon themselves the hardest privations, upon a mere principle of devotion to their fellow-men. Your sentimental lectures on this subject are, and always will be, powerless. If, unfortunately, they could mislead a few operatives, they would just make so many dupes. Let a merchant set to work to sell his wares on the principle of Fraternity, and I venture to predict that, in less than a month, he will see himself and his children reduced to beggary.

Providence has done well, then, in giving to the social state very different guarantees. Taking man as we find him,—sensibility and individuality, benevolence and self-love being inseparable,—we cannot hope, we cannot desire to see the motive of personal interest universally eradicated—nor can we understand how it could be. And yet nothing short of this would be necessary in order to restore the equilibrium of human relations; for if you break this main-spring of action only in certain chosen spirits, you create two classes,—scoundrels whom you thus tempt to make victims of their fellow-men—and the virtuous, for whom the part of victims is reserved.

Seeing, then, that as regards labour and exchanges, the principle *each for himself* must inevitably have the predominance as a motive of action, the marvellous and admirable thing is, that the Author of all should have made use of that principle in order to realize, in the social order, the maxim of the advocates of Fraternity, *each for all*. In His skilful hand, the obstacle has become the instrument. The general interest has been intrusted to personal interest, and the one has become infallible because the other is indestructible. To me it would seem that, in presence of these wondrous results, the constructors of artificial societies might, without any excess of humility, acknowledge that, as regards organization, the Divine Architect has far surpassed them.

Remark, too, that in the natural order of society, the principle of *each for all*, based upon the principle of *each for himself*, is much more complete, much more absolute, much more personal, than it would be in the Socialist and Communist point of view. Not only do we work for all, but we cannot realize a single step of progress without its being profitable to the Community at large. (See Part I. chapter x., and *ante*, chapter xi.) The order of things

has been so marvellously arranged, that when we have invented a new process, or discovered the liberality of nature in any department—some new source of fertility in the soil, or some new mode of action in one of the laws of the physical world,—the profit is ours temporarily, transiently, so long as to prove just as a recompense, and useful as an encouragement,—after which the advantage escapes from our grasp, in spite of all our efforts to retain it. From individual it becomes social, and falls for ever into the domain of the common and the gratuitous. And while we thus impart the fruits of our progress to our fellow-men, we ourselves become participators in the progress which other men have achieved.

In short, by the rule *each for himself*, individual efforts, reinforced and invigorated, act in the direction of *each for all*, and every partial step of progress brings a thousand times more to society, in gratuitous utility, than it has brought to its inventor in direct profits.

With the maxim *each for all* no one would act exclusively *for himself*. What producer would take it into his head to double his labour in order to add a thirty-millionth part to his wages?

It may be said, then, why refute the Socialist aphorism? What harm can it do? Undoubtedly it will not introduce into workshops, counting-rooms, warehouses, nor establish in fairs and markets, the principle of self-sacrifice. But then it will either tend to nothing, and then we may let it sleep in peace, or it will bend somewhat that stiffness of the egotistical principle, which, excluding all sympathy, has scarcely right to claim any.

What is false is always dangerous. It is always a dangerous thing to represent as detestable and pernicious an eternal and universal principle which God has evidently destined to the conservation and advancement of the human race; a principle, I allow, as far as motive is concerned, which does not come home to our heart, but which, when viewed with reference to its results, astonishes and satisfies the mind; a principle, moreover, which leaves the field perfectly free to the action of those more elevated motives which God has implanted in the heart of man.

But, then, what happens? The Socialist public adopts only one-half the Socialist maxim—the last half, *all for each*. They continue as before to work *each for himself*, but they require, over and above, that all should work for them.

It must be so. When dreamers desired to change the grand

mainspring of human exertion, by substituting fraternity for individualism, they found it necessary to invent a hypocritical contradiction. They set themselves to call out to the masses,—“Stifle self-love in your hearts and follow us; you will be rewarded for it by unbounded wealth and enjoyment.” When men try to parody the Gospel, they should come to a Gospel conclusion. Self-denial implies sacrifice and pain—self-devotion means, “Take the lowest seat, be poor, and suffer voluntarily.” But under pretence of abnegation to promise enjoyment; to exhibit wealth and prosperity behind the pretended sacrifice; to combat a passion which they brand with the name of egotism by addressing themselves to the grossest and most material tendencies;—this is not only to render homage to the indestructible vitality of the principle they desire to overthrow, but to exalt it to the highest point while declaiming against it; it is to double the forces of the enemy, instead of conquering him; to substitute unjust covetousness for legitimate individualism; and, in spite of all the artifice of a mystical jargon, to excite the grossest sensualism. Let avarice answer this appeal.\*

And is that not the position in which we now are? What is the universal cry among all ranks and classes? *All for each*. In pronouncing the word *each*, we are thinking of ourselves, and what we ask is to have a share which we have not merited, in the fruits of other men’s labour. In other words, we systematize spoliation. No doubt, spoliation, simple and naked, is so unjust that we repudiate it; but, by dint of the maxim *all for each*, we allay the scruples of conscience. We impose upon others the *duty* of working for us, and we arrogate to ourselves the *right* to enjoy the fruits of other men’s labour. We summon the State, the law, to impose the pretended *duty*, to protect the pretended *right*, and we arrive at the whimsical result of robbing one another in the sacred name of Fraternity. We live at other men’s expense, and attribute heroism to the sacrifice. What an odd, strange thing the human mind is!

\* When the van-guard of the Icarian expedition left Havre, I questioned some of these visionaries with a view to discover their real thoughts. *Competence easily obtained*, such was their hope and their motive. One of them said to me, “I am going, and my brother follows with the second expedition. He has eight children, and you see what a great thing it will be for him to have no longer to educate and maintain them.” “I see it at once,” I replied, “but that heavy charge must fall on some other body.” To rid oneself of a burden and transfer it to the shoulders of another, such was the sense in which these unfortunate people understood the apophthegm of Fraternity—*all for each*.

and how subtle is covetousness! It is not enough that each of us should endeavour to increase his share at the expense of his fellows, it is not enough that we should desire to profit by labour that we have not performed; we persuade ourselves that in acting thus we are displaying a sublime example of self-sacrifice. We almost go the length of comparing ourselves to the primitive Christians, and yet we blind ourselves so far as not to see that the sacrifices which make us weep in fond admiration of our own virtue, are sacrifices which we do not make, but which, on the contrary, we exact.\*

It is worth observing the manner in which this mystification is effected.

Steal! Oh fy, that is mean—besides it leads to the hulks, for the law forbids it. But if the law authorized it, and lent its aid, would not that be very convenient? . . . . What a happy thought! . . . .

No time is lost in soliciting from the law some trifling privilege, a small monopoly, and as it may cost some pains to protect it, the State is asked to take it under its charge. The State and the law come to an understanding to realize exactly that which it was their business to prevent or to punish. By degrees the taste for monopolies gains ground. No class but desires a monopoly. *All for each*, they cry; we desire also to appear as philanthropists, and show that we understand solidarity.

It happens that the privileged classes, in thus robbing each other, lose at least as much by the exactions to which they are subject, as they gain by the contributions which they levy. Besides, the great body of the working classes, to whom no monopolies can be accorded, suffer from them until they can endure it no longer. They rise up, and cover the streets with barricades and blood; and then we must come to a reckoning with them.

What is their demand? Do they require the abolition of the abuses, privileges, monopolies, and restrictions under which they suffer? Not at all. They also are imbued with philanthropy. They have been told that the celebrated apophthegm *all for each* is the solution of the social problem. They have had it demonstrated to them over and over again that monopoly (which in reality is only a theft) is nevertheless quite moral if sanctioned by law. Then they demand . . . . What? . . . . Monopolies! They also summon the State to supply them with education, employment,

\* See the pamphlet *Spoliation et Loi*, p. 22 et seq.—EDITOR.

credit, assistance, at the expense of the people. What a strange illusion! and how long will it last? We can very well conceive how all the higher classes, beginning with the highest, can come to demand favours and privileges. Below them there is a great popular mass upon whom the burden falls. But that the people, when once conquerors, should take it into their heads to enter into the privileged class, and create monopolies for themselves at their own expense; that they should enlarge the area of abuses in order to live upon them; that they should not see that there is nothing below them to support those acts of injustice: this is one of the most astonishing phenomena of our age, or of any age.

What has been the consequence? By pursuing this course, Society has been brought to the verge of shipwreck. Men became alarmed, and with reason. The people soon lost their power, and the old spread of abuses has been provisionally resumed.

The lesson, however, has not been quite lost upon the higher classes. They find that it is necessary to do justice to the working class. They ardently desire to succeed in this, not only because their own security depends upon it, but impelled, as we must acknowledge, by a spirit of equity. Of this I am thoroughly convinced, that the wealthier classes desire nothing more than to discover the solution of the great problem. I am satisfied that if we were to ask the greater part of our wealthy citizens to give up a considerable portion of their fortune in order to secure the future happiness and contentment of the people, they would cheerfully make the sacrifice. They anxiously seek the means of coming (according to the consecrated phrase) *to the assistance of the labouring classes*. But for that end on what plan have they fallen? . . . Still the communism of monopolies; a mitigated communism, however, and which they hope to subject to prudential regulation. That is all—they go no farther. . . .

### XIII.

#### R E N T.\*

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IF, with an increase in the value of land, a corresponding augmentation took place in the value of the products of the soil, I could understand the opposition which the theory I have explained in the present work (Part I., chap. ix.) has encountered. It might be argued, "that in proportion as civilisation is developed the condition of the labourer becomes worse in comparison with that of the proprietor. This may be an inevitable necessity, but assuredly it is not a law of harmony."

Happily it is not so. In general those circumstances which cause an augmentation of the value of land diminish at the same time the price of landed produce. . . . Let me explain this by an example.

Suppose a field worth £100 situated ten leagues from a town. A road is made which passes near this field, and opens up a market for its produce. The field immediately becomes worth £150. The proprietor having by this means acquired facilities for improvement and for a more varied culture, then increases the value of the land, and it comes to be worth £200.

The value of the field is now doubled. Let us examine this added value—both as regards the question of justice and as regards the utility which accrues, not to the proprietor, but to the consumers of the neighbouring town.

As far as concerns the increase of value arising from ameliorations which the proprietor has made at his own cost, there can be no question. The capital he has expended follows the law of all capital.

I venture to say the same thing of the capital expended in

\* Two or three short fragments are all that the author has left us on this important subject. The reason is, that he proposed, as he has told us, to set forth the views of Mr Carey of Philadelphia, in opposition to the theory of Ricardo.—*EDITOR.*

forming the road. The operation is more circuitous, but the result is the same.

In point of fact, the proprietor has contributed to the public expenditure in proportion to the value of his field. For many years he contributed to works of general utility executed in more remote parts of the country, and at length a road has been made in a direction which is profitable to him. The gross amount of taxes which he has paid may be compared to shares taken in a Government enterprise, and the annual augmentation of rent which he derives from the formation of this new road may be compared to *dividends* upon these shares.

Will it be said that a proprietor may pay taxes for ever, without receiving anything in return? . . . But this just comes back to the case we have already put. The amelioration, although effected by the complex and somewhat questionable process of taxation, may be considered as made by the proprietor at his own cost, in proportion to the partial advantage he derives from it.

I have put the case of a road. I might have cited any other instance of Government intervention. Security, for example, contributes to give value to land, like capital, or labour. But who pays for this security? The proprietor, the capitalist, the labourer.

If the State expends its revenue judiciously, the value expended will reappear and be replaced, in some form or other, in the hands of the proprietor, the capitalist, or the labourer. In the case of the proprietor, it must take the form of an increase in the value of his land. If, on the other hand, the State expends its revenue injudiciously, it is a misfortune. The tax is lost; and that is the taxpayer's look-out. In that case, there is no augmentation of the value of the land, but that is no fault of the proprietor.

But for the produce of the soil thus augmented in value, by the action of Government and by individual industry, do the consumers of the neighbouring town pay an enhanced price? In other words, does the interest of the £100 become a charge on each quarter of wheat which the field produces? If we paid formerly £15 for it, shall we now be obliged to pay more than £15? That is an interesting question, seeing that justice and the universal harmony of interests depend on its solution.

I answer boldly, *No*.

No doubt the proprietor will now get £5 more (I assume the rate of interest to be 5 per cent.); but he gets this addition at the ex-



pense of nobody. On the contrary, the purchaser will derive a still greater profit.

The field we have supposed having been formerly at a distance from the market, was made to produce little, and on account of the difficulty of transit what was sent to market sold at a high price. Now, production is stimulated; and transport made cheaper, a greater quantity of wheat comes to market, and comes there at less cost, and is sold cheaper. Whilst yielding the proprietor a total profit of £5, its purchaser, as we have already said, may realize a still greater profit.

In short, an economy of power has been realized. For whose benefit? For the benefit of both of the contracting parties. According to what law is this gain distributed? According to the law which we have described in the case of capital, seeing that this augmentation of value is itself capital.

When capital increases, the portion falling to the proprietor or capitalist increases in absolute value and diminishes in relative value; while the portion falling to the labourer (or consumer) increases both in absolute and relative value. . . .

Observe how this takes place. In proportion as civilisation advances, lands which are situated near populous centres rise in value. Productions of an inferior kind in such places give way to productions of a superior description. First of all, pasture gives way to cereal crops, then cereal crops give way to market gardening. Products are brought from a greater distance at less cost, so that (and this in point of fact is incontestable) meat, bread, vegetables, even flowers, are sold in such places cheaper than in neighbourhoods less advanced, although manual labour costs more. . . .

#### LE CLOS-VOUGEOT.\*

. . . . *Services are exchanged for services.* Frequently services prepared beforehand are exchanged for present or future services.

The value of services is determined not by the labour they exact or have exacted, but by the labour which they save.

Now, in point of fact, human labour goes on constantly improving in efficiency.

From these premises we may deduce a phenomenon which is very

\* Celebrated vineyard of Burgundy.—TRANSLATOR.

important in social economy, which is, that *in general* anterior labour loses in exchange with present labour.

Twenty years ago I manufactured a commodity which cost me 100 days' labour. I propose an exchange, and I say to the purchaser, Give me in exchange a thing which cost you also 100 days' labour. Probably he will be in a situation to make this reply, That great progress has been made in twenty years. What you ask 100 days' labour for can be made now in 70 days. I don't measure your service by the time it has cost you, but by the service it renders me. That service is equal only to 70 days' labour, for in that time I can render it to myself, or find one who will render it to me.

The consequence is that the value of capital goes on continually deteriorating, and that anterior labour and capital are not so much favoured as superficial economists believe.

Apart from tear and wear, there is no machine a little old but loses value, for the single reason that better machines of the same kind are made nowadays.

The same thing holds in regard to land. There are few soils, to bring which into their present state of culture and fertility, has not cost more labour than would be necessary now with our more effective modern appliances.

This is what happens in the *usual* case, but not *necessarily* so.

Anterior labour may, at the present day, render greater services than it did formerly. This is rare, but it sometimes happens. For example, I store up wine which cost me twenty days' labour to produce. Had I sold it immediately, my labour would have yielded me a certain remuneration. I have preserved my wine; it has improved; the succeeding vintage has failed; in short, the price has risen, and my remuneration is greater. Why? Because I render a greater amount of service—my customers would have greater difficulty in procuring themselves such wine than I myself experienced—I satisfy a want which has become greater, more felt, etc. . . . .

This is a consideration which must always be looked to.

There are a thousand of us. Each has his piece of land, and clears it. Some time elapses, and we sell it. Now it so happens that out of 1000 there are 998 who never receive as many days' present labour in exchange for their land as it cost them formerly; and this just because the anterior labour, which was of a ruder and less efficient description, does not render as great an amount

of service comparatively as present labour. But there are two of the proprietors whose labour has been more intelligent, or, if you will, more successful. When they bring their land to market, they find that it is capable of rendering service which cannot be rivalled. Every man says to himself, It would cost me a great deal to render this service to myself, therefore I must pay well for it, for I am quite certain that it would cost me more to obtain what I am in quest of by my own exertions.

This is just the case of the celebrated vineyard, the Clos-Vougeot, and it is the same case as that of the man who finds a diamond, or possesses a fine voice, or other personal advantages or peculiarities, etc. . . . .

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In my neighbourhood there is much uncultivated land. A stranger asks, Why not cultivate this field? Because the soil is bad. But here, alongside of it, you have another of the same quality which *is* cultivated. To this objection the native has no answer.

Was he wrong in the first answer he gave, namely, *It is bad*?

No. The reason which induces him not to clear new fields is not that they are bad, for there are excellent fields which also remain uncultivated. His reason is that it would cost him more to bring this field into the same state of cultivation as the adjoining field which is cultivated, than to buy the latter.

Now, to any thinking man this proves incontestably that the field has no intrinsic value.

(Illustrate this idea by considering it in various points of view.)\*

\* Of these intended developments none, unfortunately, exist; but we may be permitted to notice, briefly, the two principal consequences of the state of matters supposed by the author.

1. Two fields, the one cultivated, A, the other uncultivated, B, being supposed of identical quality, the amount of labour formerly devoted to the clearance of A is assumed as the necessary measure of the amount of labour required for the clearance of B. We may even say that, on account of our now superior knowledge of agriculture, of our implements, of our improved means of communication, etc., a *less* amount of labour would now be necessary to bring B into cultivation than was formerly required in the case of A. If land had value in itself, A would be worth all that it cost to bring it into culture, *plus something additional for its natural productive powers*; that is to say, much more than the sum now required to bring B into

the same state. Now it is just the reverse. The field A is worth less since we buy it rather than bring B into cultivation. In purchasing A, then, we pay nothing for the natural productive powers, since the price does not even compensate the original cost of bringing it into cultivation.

2. If the field A produces 1000 measures of corn, the field B when cultivated must be supposed to produce the same quantity. The reason why A was formerly cultivated was, that formerly 1000 measures of corn amply remunerated all the labour required both for its original clearance and its annual cultivation. The reason why B is not cultivated is, that now 1000 measures of corn would not remunerate the same amount of labour, or even a less amount, as we have just before remarked.

And what does this show? Evidently that the value of human labour has risen in relation to corn; that a day's labour is worth more wages estimated in corn. In other words, corn is obtained with less effort, and is exchanged for a less amount of labour; and the theory of *the progressive dearness of the means of subsistence is erroneous*.—  
EDMON.

## MONEY.\*

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## CREDIT.†

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## XIV.

## WAGES.

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MEN are always anxiously on the outlook for something fixed. We meet sometimes with restless and unquiet spirits who have a craving for risk and adventure. But, taking mankind in the gross, we may safely affirm that what they desire is to be tranquil as regards their future, to know what they have to count upon, and be enabled to make their arrangements beforehand. To be convinced how precious fixity is in their eyes, we have only to observe how very anxious men are to obtain for themselves government employments. Nor is this on account of the honour which such places confer, for there are many of these situations where the work is not of a very elevated description, consisting in watching and vexing their fellow-citizens, and prying into their affairs. Such places, however, are not the less sought after—and why? Because they confer an assured position. Who has not heard a father speak

\* See the author's brochure, *Maudit Argent*.—EDITOR.

† See the author's brochure, *Gratuité du Crédit*.—EDITOR.

thus of his son : " I am soliciting for him a place as a candidate or supernumerary in such or such a government office. It is a pity, no doubt, that so costly an education is required—an education which might have ensured his success in a more brilliant career. As a public functionary he will not get rich, but he is certain to live. He will always have bread. Four or five years hence he will begin to receive a salary of thirty pounds a year, which will rise by degrees to a hundred and twenty or a hundred and sixty. After thirty years' service, he will be entitled to retire. His livelihood then is secured, and he must learn to live upon a small income," etc.

Fixity, then, has for most men an irresistible attraction.

And yet, when we consider the nature of man, and of his occupations, fixity would seem to be incompatible with them.

Go back in imagination to the origin of human society, and you will have difficulty in comprehending how men can ever succeed in obtaining from the community a fixed, assured, and constant quantity of the means of subsistence. Yet this is one of those phenomena which strike us less because we have them constantly before our eyes. We have public functionaries who receive fixed salaries ; proprietors who can count beforehand on their revenues ; men of fortune who can calculate on their dividends ; workmen who earn every day the same wages. Apart from the consideration of money, which is only employed to facilitate exchanges and estimates of value, we perceive that what is fixed is the quantity of the means of subsistence, the value of the satisfactions received by the various classes of workmen. Now, I maintain that this fixity, which by degrees extends to all men and all departments of industry, is a miracle of civilisation, and a marvellous effect of that social state which, in our day, is so madly decried.

For, let us go back to a primitive social state, and suppose a nation of hunters, or fishers, or shepherds, or warriors, or agriculturists, to be told, " In proportion as you advance on the road of progress, you will know more and more beforehand what amount of enjoyment will be secured to you for each year," they would not believe us. They would reply, " That must always depend on something which eludes calculation,—the inconstancy of the seasons, etc." The truth is, they could form no idea of the ingenious efforts by means of which men have succeeded in establishing a sort of mutual assurance between all places and all times.

Now, this mutual assurance against all the risks and chances of

the future is entirely dependent on a branch of human science which I shall denominate *experimental statistics*. This department of science, depending as it does upon experience, admits of indefinite progress, and consequently the fixity of which we have spoken also admits of indefinite progress. That fixity is favoured by two circumstances which are permanent in their operation: 1st, Men desire it. 2dly, They acquire every day greater facilities for realizing it.

Before showing how this fixity is established in human transactions, in which it is little thought of, let us first of all see how it operates in a transaction of which it is the special object. The reader will, in this way, comprehend what I mean by experimental statistics.

A number of men have each a house. One of these houses happens to be burnt down and its owner is ruined. All the rest immediately take alarm, and each says to himself, "The same thing may happen to me." We cannot be surprised, then, that these proprietors should unite and divide the risk of such accidents as much as possible, by establishing a mutual assurance against fire. The bargain is very simple—here is its formula: "If the house of one of us is burnt down, the rest will club to make good the loss to the man who is burnt out."

By this means each proprietor acquires a double security; in the first instance he must take a small share in all losses of this nature; but then he is assured that he will never himself be obliged to suffer the whole loss arising from any such misfortune.

In reality, and if we extend the calculation over a great number of years, we see that the proprietor makes, so to speak, a bargain with himself. He sets aside a sufficient fund to repair the misfortunes which may afterwards befall him.

This is *association*. Indeed it is to arrangements of this nature that the Socialists give exclusively the name of *association*. Whenever speculation intervenes, association, as they think, disappears. It is improved and perfected, as I think, and as we shall afterwards see.

What has led the proprietors to associate, to enter into this mutual assurance, is the love of fixity, of security. They prefer known risks to risks which are unknown, a multitude of small risks to one great one.

Their design, however, has not yet been completely attained, and there is still much uncertainty in their position. Each of them

may say, "If accidents are multiplied, my *quota* will become insupportable. In any case, I should like to know beforehand, and to have insured in the same way my furniture, my merchandise, etc."

It would seem that such inconveniencies belong to the nature of things, and that it is impossible for men to get rid of them. After each step of progress we are tempted to think that all has been accomplished. How, indeed, can we elude this *uncertainty*, which depends upon accidents still unknown to us?

But mutual assurance has developed in the social state an experimental knowledge, namely, the average annual proportion between the values lost by accident and the values assured.

Having made all the necessary calculations, a company or an individual says to the proprietors, "In entering into a mutual assurance, you have wished to purchase freedom from anxiety, and the indeterminate quota which you reserve annually to cover accidents is the price which you pay for this immunity. But if you do not know what this price is beforehand, your tranquillity is never perfect. I now propose to you, therefore, another expedient. In consideration of a *fixed annual premium* which you shall pay me, I take upon myself all your chances of accidents. I will insure you all, and here is the capital which will guarantee the fulfilment of my engagement."

The proprietors accept the proposal, even although this fixed premium should amount to somewhat more than the sum which their mutual assurance cost them; for their object is not so much to save a few shillings as to obtain perfect repose and freedom from anxiety.

At this point the Socialists pretend that the principle of association is destroyed. For my part, I think it is improved, and on the road to other improvements to which I can see no limits.

But, say the Socialists, the assured have no longer any mutual tie. They no longer see each other and come to a common understanding. Intermediary parasites have come among them, and the proof that the proprietors are now paying more than is required to cover accidents is to be found in the fact, that the insurers obtain large profits.

It is not difficult to answer this objection.

First of all, association exists, but under another form. The premium contributed by the assured is still the fund which is to make good the losses. The assured have found the means of remaining in the association without taking part in its business.



This is evidently an advantage to each of them, seeing that the design they have in view is nevertheless attained; and the possibility of remaining in the association whilst they have their independence of movement and free use of their faculties restored to them, is just the characteristic of social progress.

As regards the profit obtained by the intermediate party, it is easily explained and justified. The assured remain associated for the purpose of repairing accidents and making good what is lost. But a company has stepped in which offers them the following advantages: 1st, It takes away whatever of uncertainty remained in the position of the assured; 2dly, It frees them from all care and trouble in connexion with accidents. These are *services*, and the rule is, service for service. The proof that the intervention of the company is a service possessed of value is to be found in the fact that it is freely accepted and paid for. The Socialists only make themselves ridiculous when they declaim against such middlemen. Do they intrude themselves into commercial transactions by force? Have they any other means of introducing themselves and their services than by saying to the parties with whom they deal, "I will cost you some trouble, but I will save you more"? How, then, can they be called parasites or even intermediaries?

I affirm, moreover, that association thus transformed is on the direct road of progress in every sense.

In fact, companies which expect to realize profits proportioned to the extent of their business, promote insurances. To aid them in this they have agents in all quarters, they establish credits, they devise a thousand combinations to increase the number of the assured—in other words, of the *associated* parties. They undertake a multitude of risks which were unknown to the primitive mutual insurance associations. In short, association is extended progressively to a greater number of men and things. In proportion as this development takes place, the companies find they can lower their prices; they are even forced by competition to do so. And here we again get a glimpse of the great law, that profit soon escapes from the hands of the producer to settle in those of the consumer.

Nor is this all: companies insure each other by reassurances, so that, with a view to providing for losses, which is the principal object in view, a thousand associations scattered over England, France, Germany, and America, are melted into one grand and unique association. And what is the result? If a house is burnt

down at Bordeaux, Paris, or elsewhere, the proprietors of the whole world, English, Belgians, Germans, Spaniards, club together and repair the disaster.

This is an example of the degree of power, universality, and perfection, which may be reached by means of free and voluntary association. But to attain this they must be left free to manage their own business. Now, what happened when the Socialists, those great partisans of association, were in power? Their chief business was to threaten association in every form, and principally association for insurance. And why? Just because, in order to render itself more universal, it adopted those expedients which left each of its members in a state of independence. How little these unfortunate Socialists understand the social mechanism! They would bring us back to the rude and primitive forms which association assumed when society was in its infancy, and they would suppress all progress under the pretext that it has departed from these forms.

We shall see, by-and-by, that from the same prejudices, the same ignorance, arise their incessant declamations against *interest*. The *interest* and *wages* are *fixed*, and, consequently, improved forms of remuneration for the use of labour and capital.

The wages-system [*salarial*] has been peculiarly the butt of the Socialists. They have almost gone the length of representing it as a modified, and not greatly modified, system of slavery and thralldom. At all events, they see in it only a bargain which is one-sided and leonine, founded on liberty merely in appearance, an oppression of the weak by the strong, or the tyranny of capital over labour.

Continually wrangling about new institutions to be founded, the Socialists display in their common hatred of existing institutions, and especially of the system of remuneration by wages, a striking unanimity. If they cannot attain unity as to the new social organization to be established, they are at least marvellously united in calumniating, decrying, running down, hating, and making hated, everything which actually exists. I have assigned the reason for this elsewhere.\*

Much unfortunately takes place which is beyond the domain of philosophical discussion; and the Socialist propaganda, seconded by an ignorant and cowardly press, which, without avowing Socialism, seeks for popularity in fashionable declamations, has suc-

\* See Part I., chapters i. and ii.

ceeded in instilling hatred of the wages-system into the minds of the very people who live by wages. Workmen have become disgusted with this form of remuneration. It appears to them unjust, humiliating, and odious. They think it brands them with the mark of servitude. They desire to participate on another principle in the distribution of wealth. Hence they have fallen passionately in love with the most extravagant Utopias. They had but one step to take, and they have taken it. When the revolution of February broke out, the grand object of the working classes was to get rid of wages. Upon the means of accomplishing this they consulted their oracles; but when these oracles did not remain mute, they followed the usual mode by giving obscure utterances, in which the word which predominated was *association*, as if *association* and *wages* were incompatible. Then the workmen would try all the forms of this liberty-giving association; and, to impart to it greater attraction, they were pleased to invest it with all the charms of Solidarity, and attributed to it all the merits of Fraternity. For the moment, one would have been led to believe that the human heart itself had been about to undergo a grand transformation, and to throw off the yoke of self-interest, in order to give place to the principle of sympathy. By a singular contradiction, they hoped from association to reap at once all the glory of self-sacrifice, and material profits of hitherto unheard-of amount. They fell down before the statue of Fortune, prayed, and decreed to themselves the glory of martyrdom. It seemed as if these workmen, thus misled, and on the point of being seduced into a career of injustice, felt it necessary to shut their eyes to their true position, to glorify the methods of spoliation which had been taught them by their apostles, and place them covered with a veil in the sanctuary of a new revelation. Never, perhaps, had so many and such dangerous errors, so many and such gross contradictions, found their way before into the human brain.

Let us inquire, then, what wages really are, and consider their origin, form, and effects. Let us trace the subject to its foundation, and make sure whether, in the development of humanity, wages constitute retrogression or progress—whether in receiving wages there be anything humiliating or degrading, or which can in any degree be allied with slavery.

Services are exchanged for services, labour, efforts, pains, cares, natural or acquired ability,—these are what we give and receive. What we confer on one another is satisfaction or enjoyment. What

determines the exchange is the common advantage, and its measure is the free appreciation of reciprocal services. The various combinations to which human transactions give rise have necessitated a voluminous economic vocabulary ; but the words Profits, Interest, Wages, although indicating shades of difference, do not change the nature and foundation of things. We have still the *do ut des*, or rather the *facio ut facias*, which constitutes the basis of the whole economic evolution.\*

The class which lives by wages forms no exception to this law. Examine the subject attentively. Do these men render services ? Unquestionably they do. Are services rendered to them ? Undoubtedly they are. Are these services exchanged freely and voluntarily ? Do we perceive in this kind of transaction any appearance of fraud or violence ? It is at this point, perhaps, that the grievances of the workman begin. They don't go the length of pretending that they are deprived of their liberty, but they assert that this liberty is merely nominal and a mockery, because the man whose necessities force the determination is not really free. It remains for us to inquire, then, whether the defect of liberty thus understood does not belong to the situation of the workman rather than to the mode of his remuneration.

When one man enters into the service of another, his remuneration may consist in a part of the work produced, or in a determinate wage. In either case he must bargain for this part of the product—for it may be greater or less,—or for this wage—for it may be higher or lower. If the man is in a state of absolute destitution, if he cannot wait, if he acts on the spur of urgent necessity, he must submit, and cannot get rid of the other's exactions. But you will observe that it is not the form of remuneration which gives rise to this dependence. Whether he runs the risk of the enterprise by stipulating for a share of the product, or bargains for a fixed remuneration whether the other gain or lose, it is his precarious situation which gives him an inferior position in the discussion which precedes the arrangement. Those innovators who have represented association to the working classes as an infallible remedy have misled them, and are themselves mistaken. They can convince themselves of this by observing attentively the circumstances in cases where the indigent workman receives part of the product in place of wages. There are assuredly no men in the country worse off than fishermen or vine-dressers, although they

\* Part I., p. 146.

have the satisfaction of enjoying all the benefits which the Socialists denominate, exclusively, *association*.

But before proceeding to inquire into the circumstances which influence the quota of wages, I must define, or rather describe, the nature of the transaction.

Men have a tendency—which is natural, and, therefore, advantageous, moral, universal, indestructible—to desire security with reference to the means of subsistence, to seek fixity, and avoid uncertainty.

However, in the early stages of society uncertainty reigns supreme, and it has frequently astonished me that Political Economy has failed to mark the great and happy efforts which have been made to restrain this uncertainty within narrower and narrower limits.

Take the case of a tribe of hunters, or a nomad people, or a colony newly founded,—is there a single man who can say with certainty what to-morrow's labour will be worth? Would there not even seem to be an incompatibility between the two ideas, and that nothing can be of a more causal nature than the result of labour, whether applied to the chase, to fishing, or to agriculture?

It will be difficult, then, to find, in an infant society, anything which resembles stipends, salaries, wages, revenues, rents, interest, assurance, etc., which are all things which have been invented in order to give more and more fixity to personal situations, to get quit, to a greater and greater degree, of that feeling so painful to men of uncertainty with reference to the means of subsistence.

The progress which has been made in this direction is indeed admirable, although custom has so familiarized us with this phenomenon that we fail to attend to it. In fact, since the results of labour, and consequently the enjoyments of mankind, may be so profoundly modified by events, by unforeseen circumstances, by the caprices of nature, the uncertainty of the seasons, and accidents of every kind, we may ask how it comes to pass that so great a number of men find themselves set free for a time, and some of them for life, by means of rents, salaries, and retiring pensions, from this species of *eventuality*, of uncertainty, which would seem to be essentially part of our nature.

The efficient cause, the motive power of this beautiful evolution of the human race, is the tendency of all men towards competency and material prosperity, of which Fixity is so essential a part. The means consist in the substitution of a fixed unconditional bar-

gain for one dependent merely on appreciable chances, or the gradual abandonment of that primitive form of association which consists in committing all the parties concerned irrevocably to all the risks and chances of the enterprise ; in other words, the improvement of association. It is singular at least that all our great modern reformers exhibit association to us as destroyed by the very element which improves and perfects it.

In order that men should consent to take upon themselves, unconditionally, risks which fall naturally on others, it is necessary that a species of knowledge, which I have called *experimental statistics*, should have made some progress ; for experience alone can place them in a situation to appreciate these risks, at least approximately, and consequently to appreciate *the value of the service* rendered in securing them against such risks. This is the reason why the bargains and transactions of rude and ignorant nations admit no stipulations of this nature, and hence, as I have said, uncertainty exercises over such people uncontrolled power. Were a savage, grown old, and having laid up some stock of game, to take a young hunter into his service, he would not give him fixed wages, but a share in the produce of the chase. How, indeed, could either of them, from the known infer the unknown ? The teachings of past experience do not permit them to insure the future beforehand.

In times of barbarism and inexperience, men, no doubt, *associate*, for we have demonstrated that otherwise they could not exist ; but association can assume among them only that primitive and elementary form which the Socialists represent as the only one which can secure our future safety.

When two men have long worked on together, encountering equal risks, there at length comes a time when, from experience, they can estimate and appreciate the value of these risks, and one of them consents to take the entire risk upon his own shoulders, in consideration of a fixed recompense.

This arrangement is undoubtedly a step of progress, and it is shown to be so by the very fact that it has been effected freely and voluntarily by the two parties, who would not have entered into it had it not been felt to be for their mutual benefit. It is easy to see in what the benefit consists. The one party gains by obtaining the exclusive management of an undertaking of which he takes all the risks upon himself ; the other by attaining that fixity of position which is so much desired. And society at large must be

benefited by having an enterprise, formerly subjected to two minds and two wills, henceforth conducted with unity of views and unity of action.

But although association is modified in this way, it by no means follows that it is dissolved. The co-operation of the two men is continued, although the mode of dividing the product of their enterprise has been changed. Association is not vitiated by an innovation voluntarily agreed to, and which satisfies all parties.

The co-operation of anterior labour and present labour is always, or almost always, required in order to realize new means of satisfaction and enjoyment. Capital and labour, in uniting in a common undertaking, are, in the first instance, forced to undertake each its share of the risk; and this continues until the value of the risk can be experimentally estimated. Then two tendencies, which are alike natural to the human heart, manifest themselves—I mean the tendencies towards *unity of direction* and *fixity of situation*. Capital then says to labour: “Experience has taught us that your eventual profit amounts, on an average, to so much. If you wish it, I will ensure you this amount, and take charge of the operation, taking upon myself the chances of profit or loss.”

Labour may possibly answer: “This proposal suits me very well. Sometimes I earn twenty pounds a year; sometimes I earn sixty. These fluctuations are very inconvenient, for they hinder me from regulating uniformly my own expenditure and that of my family. It is an advantage to me to get rid of this uncertainty, and to receive a fixed recompense of forty pounds.”

By this arrangement the terms of the contract will be changed. They will continue to *unite their efforts*, and to *share the proceeds*, and consequently the association will not be dissolved; but it will be modified in this way, that the capitalist will take all the risks with the compensation of all the extraordinary profits, whilst the labourer will be secured the advantages of fixity. Such is the origin of Wages.

The agreement may take place in the reverse way. Frequently the person who undertakes a commercial enterprise says to the capitalist: “Hitherto we have worked together, sharing the risks. Now that we are in a situation to appreciate these risks, I propose to make a fixed bargain. You have invested a thousand pounds in the undertaking, for which one year you receive twenty-five pounds, another year seventy-five. If you agree to it, I will give you fifty pounds, or 5 per cent. per annum, and free you from all

risk, on condition that I have henceforth the entire management of the concern."

The capitalist will probably answer: "Since, with great and troublesome fluctuations, I receive, on an average, only fifty pounds per annum, I should much prefer to have that sum regularly assured to me. I shall, therefore, allow my capital to remain in the concern, but I am to be exempted from all risk. My activity and intelligence will now be free to engage in some other undertaking."

This is an advantage in a social, as well as in an individual point of view.

We see that men are constantly in quest of a fixed and stable position, and that there is an incessant effort to diminish and circumscribe on all sides the element of uncertainty. Where two men participate in a common risk, this risk, having a substantive existence, cannot be annihilated; but the tendency is for one of them to take that risk upon himself. If the capitalist undertakes the risk, the labourer's remuneration is fixed under the name of *wages*. If the labourer runs the chances of profit or loss, then the remuneration of the capitalist is fixed under the name of *interest*.

And as capital is nothing else than human services, we may say that *capital* and *labour* are two words which in reality express one and the same idea; and, consequently, the same thing may be said of *interest* and *wages*. Thus, where false science never fails to find antagonism, true science ever finds identity.

Considered, then, with reference to their origin, nature, and form, *wages* have in them nothing degrading or humiliating any more than *interest* has. Both constitute the return for present and anterior labour derived from the results of a common enterprise. Only it almost always happens that one of the two associates agrees to take upon himself the risk. If it be the present labour which claims a uniform remuneration, the chances of profit are given up in consideration of wages. If it be the anterior labour which claims a fixed return, the capitalist gives up his eventual chance of profits for a determinate rate of *interest*.

For my own part, I am convinced that this new stipulation which is ingrafted on the primitive form of association, far from destroying it, improves and perfects it. I have no doubt of this, when I consider that such a stipulation takes its rise from a felt want, from the natural desire of all men for stability; and, moreover, that it



satisfies all parties, without injury, but, on the contrary, by serving the interests of the public.

Modern reformers, who, under pretence of having invented association, desire to bring it back to its primitive and rudimentary forms, ought to tell us in what respect these *fixed bargains* are opposed to justice or equity, in what respect they are prejudicial to progress, and on what principle they wish to interdict them. They ought also to tell us why, if such stipulations bear the stamp of barbarism, they are constantly and more and more mixed up with that association which is represented as the perfection of human society.

In my opinion, such stipulations are among the most marvellous manifestations, as they are among the most powerful springs, of progress. They are at once the perfection and reward of a past and very ancient civilisation, and the starting point of a new and unlimited career of future civilisation. Had society adhered to that primitive form of association which saddles all the parties interested with a share of the risks of an enterprise, ninety-nine out of every hundred of such enterprises never would have been undertaken. The man who at the present day participates in a score of enterprises would have been tied down for ever to one. Unity of design and of will would have been wanting in all commercial operations; and mankind would never have tasted that precious good which is perhaps the source of genius—stability.

The *wages-system* [*salariat*], then, takes its rise in a natural and indestructible tendency. Observe, however, that it satisfies men's desires but imperfectly. It renders the remuneration of workmen more uniform, more equal, and brings it nearer to an average; but there is one thing which it cannot do, and which their admission to a participation in profits and risks could not accomplish, namely, to ensure them employment.

And here I cannot help remarking how powerful the feeling is to which I have made reference throughout the whole of this chapter, and the very existence of which our modern reformers do not seem even to suspect,—I mean men's aversion to uncertainty. It is exactly this very feeling which has made it so easy for Socialist declaimers to create such a hatred on the part of the working classes to receive their remuneration in the shape of wages.

We can conceive three phases in the condition of the labourer: the predominance of uncertainty; the predominance of stability;

and an intermediate state, from which uncertainty is partly excluded, but not sufficiently so to give place to fixity and stability.

What the working classes do not sufficiently understand is, that the association which the Socialists preach up to them is the infancy of society, the period when men are groping their way, the time of quick transitions and fluctuations, of alternations of plethora and atrophy—in a word, the period when absolute uncertainty reigns supreme. The wages-system, on the contrary, forms the intermediate link between uncertainty and fixity.

Now, the working classes, being far as yet from feeling themselves in a state of stability, place their hopes—like all men ill at ease—on a certain change of position. This is the reason why it has been an easy task for Socialism to impose upon them by the use of the grand term *association*. The working classes fancy themselves pushed forward, when they are in reality falling behind.

Yes, these unfortunate people are falling back to the primitive and rudimentary stage of the social movement; for what is the association now so loudly preached up to them but the subjection of all to all risks and contingencies? This is inevitable in times of ignorance, since fixed bargains presuppose some progress at least in experimental statistics. But the doctrine now inculcated is nothing else than a pure and simple revival of the reign of uncertainty.

The workmen who were enthusiasts for association when they knew it only in theory, were enchanted when the revolution of February seemed to render possible its practical adoption.

At that period many employers of labour, either infected with the universal infatuation, or giving way to their fears, offered to substitute a participation in the returns for payment by wages. But the workmen did not much fancy this solidarity of risk. They understood very well what was offered them; for in case the enterprise turned out a losing concern, they would have had no remuneration of any kind,—which to them was death.

We saw then what would not have been to the credit of our working classes, had the blame not lain with the pretended reformers, in whom, unhappily, they placed confidence. The working classes demanded a sort of bastard association in which the rate of wages was to be maintained, and in which they were to be entitled to a share of the profits without being subject to any of the losses.

The workmen would probably never of themselves have thought

of putting forward such pretensions. There is in human nature a fund of good sense and a feeling of justice to which such bare-faced iniquity is repugnant. To corrupt man's heart, you must begin by depraving his intellect.

This is what the leaders of the Socialist school did not fail to do ; and with this fact before us, I am frequently asked whether their intentions were not perverse. I am always inclined to respect men's motives ; but it is exceedingly difficult, under such circumstances, to exculpate the Socialist chiefs.

After having, by the unjust and persevering declamations with which their books are filled, irritated the working classes against their employers, after having persuaded them that they were in a state of war, in which everything is fair against the enemy, they enveloped the ultimatum of the workmen in scientific subtleties, and even in clouds of mysticism. They figured an abstract being called Society which owed to each of its members a *minimum*, that is to say, an assured means of subsistence. " You have, then, a right," they told the workmen, " to demand a fixed wage." In this way they began by satisfying the natural desire of men for stability. Then they proceeded to teach them that, independently of wages, the workman should have a share in the profits ; and when asked whether he was also to bear his share of the losses, their answer was, that in virtue of State intervention and the guarantee of the taxpayer, they had invented a system of universal industry, protected from all loss. By this means they removed all the remaining scruples of the unfortunate workmen ; and when the revolution of February broke out, we saw them, as I have said, disposed to make three stipulations :—

- 1st, Continuance of wages ;
- 2d, Participation in profits ;
- 3d, Immunity from losses.

It may be said, perhaps, that these stipulations were neither so unjust nor so impossible as they appeared, seeing that they are introduced in many enterprises, having reference to newspapers, railways, etc.

I answer that there is something truly puerile in allowing oneself to be duped by high-sounding names applied to very trivial things. A little candour will at once convince us that this participation in profits, which some concerns allow to their workmen receiving wages, does not constitute association, or merit that title, nor is it a great revolution introduced into the relations of two

classes of society. It is only an ingenious and useful encouragement given to workmen receiving wages, under a form which is not exactly new, although it has been represented as an adhesion to Socialism. Employers who, in adopting this custom, devote a tenth, a twentieth, or a hundredth part of their profits, when they have any, to this *largesse* bestowed on their workmen, may make a great noise about it, and proclaim themselves the generous renovators of the social order; but it is really unworthy of occupying more of our time at present, and I return to my argument.

The system of payment by wages, then, was a step of progress. In the first instance, anterior labour and present labour were associated together with common risks, in common enterprises, the circle of which, in such circumstances, must have been very limited. If society had not discovered other combinations, no important work could ever have been undertaken. Men would have remained hunters and fishers, and there might have been perhaps some rude attempts at agriculture.

Afterwards, in obedience to the double feeling which prompts us to seek stability, and, at the same time, retain the direction of those operations of which we must encounter the risks, the two associates, without putting an end to the association, seek to supersede the joint hazard by a fixed bargain, and agree that one of them should give the other a fixed remuneration, and take upon himself the whole risk, along with the exclusive direction of the enterprise. When this fixity applies to the anterior labour, or capital, it is called *interest*; when it applies to the present labour, it is called *wages*.

But, as I have already said, wages serve only imperfectly to constitute a state of stability for a certain class of men, or of security in regard to the means of subsistence. It is one step, and a very marked one, towards the realization of this benefit, and so difficult that at first sight we should have thought it impossible; but it does not effect its entire realization.

And it is perhaps worthy of remark in passing, that fixity of situation, stability, resembles in one respect all the great results of which mankind are in pursuit. We are always approximating to such results, but we never fully attain them. For the very reason that stability is a good, a benefit, we must always be making efforts more and more to extend its domain; but it is not in our nature ever to obtain complete possession of it. We may even go the length of saying that to obtain such possession would

not be desirable for man in his present state. Absolute good of whatever kind would put an end to all desire, all effort, all combination, all thought, all foresight, all virtue. Perfection excludes the notion of perfectibility.

The working classes having then, with the lapse of time, and the progress of civilisation, reached the improved system of payment by wages, have not stopped short at that point, or relaxed their efforts to realize stability.

No doubt wages come in with certainty at the conclusion of the day's work ; but when circumstances—as, for example, an industrial crisis, or a protracted illness—have interrupted work, the wages are interrupted also. What, then, is the workman to do ? Are he and his wife and children to be deprived of food ?

He has but one resource, and that is, to save, while employed, the means of supplying his wants in sickness and old age.

But, in the individual case, who can estimate beforehand the comparative length of time in which he has to assist, or be assisted ?

What cannot be done in the individual case may be found more practicable with reference to the masses in virtue of *the law of averages*. The tribute paid by the workman while employed to provide for his support in periods of stoppage answers the purpose much more effectually, and with much more regularity and certainty, when it is centralized by association, than when it is abandoned to individual chances.

Hence the origin of *Friendly Societies*—admirable institutions which benevolence had given birth to long before the name of Socialism was ever heard of. It would be difficult to say who was their inventor. The true inventor, I believe, was the felt want of some such institutions—the desire of men for something fixed, the restless active instinct which leads us to remove the obstacles which mankind encounter in their progress towards stability.

I have myself seen friendly societies rise up spontaneously, more than five-and-twenty years ago, among the most destitute labourers and artisans of the poorest villages in the department of the Landes.

The obvious design of these societies is to equalize enjoyments, and to spread and distribute over all periods of life the wages earned in days of health and prosperity. In all localities in which they exist, these societies have conferred immense benefits. The contributors are sustained by a feeling of security, a feeling the

most precious and consolatory which can enter the heart of man in his pilgrimage here below. Moreover, they feel their reciprocal dependence and their usefulness to each other. They see at what point the prosperity or adversity of each individual, or of each profession, becomes the prosperity or adversity of all.

They meet together on certain occasions for religious worship, as provided by their rules; and then they are called to exercise over each other that vigilant surveillance so proper to inspire self-respect, which is the first and most difficult step in the march of civilisation.

What has hitherto ensured the success of these societies,—a success which has been slow, indeed, like everything which concerns the masses,—is liberty: of this there can be no doubt.

The natural danger which they encounter is the removal of the sense of responsibility. It is never without creating great dangers and great difficulties for the future, that we set an individual free from the consequences of his own acts.\*

Were all our citizens to say, "We will club together to assist those who cannot work, or who cannot find employment," we should fear to see developed to a dangerous extent man's natural tendency to idleness; we should fear that the laborious would soon become the dupes of the slothful. Mutual assistance, then, implies mutual surveillance, without which the common fund would soon be exhausted. This reciprocal surveillance is for such association a necessary guarantee of existence—a security for each contributor that he shall not be made to play the part of dupe; and it constitutes besides the true morality of the institution. By this means, we see drunkenness and debauchery gradually disappear; for what right could that man have to assistance from the common fund who has brought disease and want of employment upon himself by his own vicious habits? It is this surveillance which re-establishes that responsibility which the association might otherwise tend to enfeeble.

Now, in order that this surveillance should operate beneficially, friendly societies must be free and select, and have the control of their own rules, as well as of their own funds. It is necessary also that they should be able to suit their rules to the requirements of each locality.

Suppose Government to interfere, it is easy to see the part which it would play. Its first business would be to lay hold of all

\* See *post*, Chapter xx., on *Responsibility*.

these funds, under the pretence of centralizing them; and to give a colour to the proceeding, it would promise to enlarge the funds from resources taken from the taxpayer. "Is it not," it would be said, "very natural and very just that the State should contribute to so great, so generous, so philanthropic, so humane a work?" This is the first injustice—to introduce the element of force into the society, and, along with the contributions, to obtrude citizens who have no right to a share of the fund. And then, under pretence of unity, of solidarity, the State would set itself to fuse all these associations into one, subject to the same rules.

But, I would ask, what will become of the morality of the institution when its funds are augmented by taxation; when no one except a government official has an interest to defend the common stock; when every one, instead of feeling it his duty to prevent abuses, will take pleasure in favouring them; when all mutual surveillance has ceased; and when to feign disease would only be to play off a good trick on the Government? The Government, to do it justice, is well disposed to defend itself; but being no longer able to avail itself of private action, it must necessarily substitute official action. It will name examiners, controllers, inspectors. Countless formalities will be interposed between want and assistance. In short, what was originally an admirable institution will be transformed into a mere department of police.

The State will, in the first instance, perceive only the advantage of swelling the mob of its creatures, of multiplying the places at its disposal, and of extending its patronage and electioneering influence. It will not remark that in arrogating to itself a new function, it has assumed a new responsibility,—a responsibility which I venture to designate as fearful. For what must the immediate consequence be? The working classes will no longer regard the common fund as a property which they administer and keep up, and the limits of which are the limits of their rights. They will soon accustom themselves to regard assistance in cases of sickness or want of employment, not as proceeding from a limited fund, prepared by their own foresight, but as a debt due to them by society. Its resources will appear to them unbounded, and they will never be contented with their share. The State will find itself under the necessity of demanding constant additions to the budget. Encountering opposition in that, the Government will find itself involved in inextricable difficulties. Abuses will go on increasing, which, year after year, they will shrink from reforming,

until an explosion comes at last. And then it will be found that we have to deal with a population which can no longer act for itself, which expects everything from a minister or a prefect, even subsistence, and whose ideas are so far perverted as to have lost all rational notions of Right, Property, Liberty, or Justice.

Such are some of the reasons which alarmed me, I confess, when I saw lately that a Commission of the Legislative Assembly had been charged to prepare a project of law on friendly societies. It struck me that the hour of their destruction was approaching, and it afflicted me the more that I had thought a great future was in store for them, could we only preserve them in the bracing air of liberty. Is it then, I would ask, so very difficult a thing to leave men to make a trial, to feel their way, to make a choice, to find themselves mistaken, to rectify their mistakes, to inform themselves, to act in concert, to manage their own property and their own interests, to act for themselves on their own proper risk and peril, and on their own responsibility? Is it not evident that this is the way to make them really men? Shall we never cease to begin with the fatal hypothesis that all governors are guardians, and the governed only children?

I maintain that, left to the vigilance of the parties interested, our Friendly Societies have before them a great future, and I require no other proof of this than what has taken place on the other side of the Channel.

"In England, individual foresight has not waited for Government impulse to organize a powerful and reciprocal association between the working classes. For a long period, *free* associations, administering their own affairs, have been founded in all the principal towns of Great Britain," etc. . . . .

"The total number of these associations for the United Kingdom amounts to 33,223, including not less than 3,052,000 individuals—one half the adult population of Great Britain." . . . .

"This great confederation of the working classes, this institution of effective and practical fraternity, rests on the most solid basis. Their revenue is five millions sterling, and their accumulated capital amounts to eleven millions and two hundred thousand pounds."

"It is upon this fund that the contributors draw when out of employment. We are astonished to see how England rallies from the immense and profound perturbations which her gigantic industry experiences from time to time and almost periodically—and



the explanation of the phenomenon is, to a great extent, to be found in the facts now stated."

"Mr Roebuck wished, on account of the great importance of the question, that the Government *would assume the initiative* by taking the question into its own hands. . . . This was opposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer."

"Where individual interests are sufficient for their own free government, power, in England, judges it useless to interpose its action. It watches from above to see that all goes on regularly; but it leaves to every man the merit of his exertions, and the care of administering his affairs, according to his own notions and convenience. It is to this independence of her citizens that England assuredly owes a portion of her greatness as a nation." \*

It might have been added that it is to that independence also that the citizens owe their experience and personal worth. To that independence, too, the English Government owes its relative freedom from responsibility, and consequently its stability.

Among the institutions which may take their rise from Friendly Societies, when they shall have made that advance which has scarcely yet been begun, I should give the first place, on account of their social importance, to the labourer's *Caisse de Retraite*.†

There are persons who treat such an institution as a chimera. Such people, no doubt, pretend to be acquainted with the extreme limits, as regards Stability, beyond which the human race is not permitted to go. I would ask them a few simple questions: If they had never known anything beyond the social state of those barbarous tribes who live by hunting and fishing, would they have been able to anticipate the existence, I do not say of our present land revenues, of Government funds, and fixed salaries, but even of the system of payment by wages, which is the first step towards fixity in the condition of the poorest classes? And then, if they had never seen anything beyond this wages-system, as it exists in countries which have not yet displayed the spirit of association, would they have ventured to predict the destinies reserved for *Friendly Societies* as we find them at work in our own day in England? Do they imagine that these first steps of progress were more easy than it is for us to establish *Caisses de Retraite*? Is this third step more difficult to take than the other two?

\* Extract from *La Presse*, 22d June 1850.

† *Caisse de Retraite*,—A friendly accumulation society which has for object to provide for the labourer in his old age.—See an account of these *Caisses de Retraite* in *Dictionnaire de l'Économie Politique*, t. i. p. 255.—TRANSLATOR.

For myself, I see clearly that mankind thirst after stability. I see them, century after century, adding to their incomplete conquests, for the benefit of one class or another, and this by marvellous processes, which would seem to be much above individual invention, and I confess that I dare not venture to predict at what point men will stop short on the road of progress.

One thing is certain, that these *Caisses de Retraite* are universally, unanimously, ardently desired by all our workmen; and very naturally so.

I have frequently interrogated them, and I have always found that the great pain and grief of their existence is not the severity of their work, nor the smallness of their wages, nor even the irritation which the spectacle of inequality is calculated to excite. No, what affects them, discourages them, pains them, tortures them, is their uncertainty as regards the future. Whatever profession we may belong to, whether we are public functionaries, or men of independent fortune, or landed proprietors, or merchants, physicians, lawyers, soldiers, magistrates, we enjoy without perceiving it, consequently without acknowledging it, the progress which has been realized by Society—so that we cannot comprehend the torture of uncertainty. Let us place ourselves, then, in the situation of a workman, of an artisan who, on getting up every morning, is haunted by such thoughts as these: “I am young and robust; I work on, and sometimes harder than my neighbours, and have less leisure than they. And yet I have difficulty in providing for the modest wants of myself and of my wife and children. But what will become of me, what will become of them, when old age or disease shall have palsied my arm? To provide for those days of helplessness by saving from my wages would require self-control and prudence almost superhuman. Yet in spite of sickness, I have the prospect of enjoying happiness by means of a Friendly Society. Old age, however, is not an eventuality; it will come inevitably and without fail. Every day I feel its approach; it will soon overtake me; and then, after a life of honest labour, what prospect have I before me? For myself the garret, the hospital, or the jail; for my wife, beggary; for my daughter, worse still. Oh for some social institution which would compel me even by force, while still young, to secure a provision for old age!”

Such are the thoughts, feebly as I have expressed them, which every day, and every night, and every hour, haunt the terror-stricken imaginations of vast numbers of our fellow-men. And

when a problem presents itself under such conditions, you may be very sure that it is not insoluble.

If in their efforts to impart more stability to their future, the working classes have disseminated alarm among the other classes of society, it has arisen from their having given to these efforts a false, dangerous, and unjust direction. Their first idea, according to French custom, has been to attack the treasury; to found the *Caisses de Retraite* on the contributions of the taxpayer, and to bring into play the State and the Law, that is to say, to secure all the profits of spoliation without incurring the dangers, or bearing the shame of it.

It is not from this quarter of the social horizon that the institution so much desired by the working classes may be expected to come. The *Caisse de Retraite*, in order that its origin may be in keeping with its end and design, and to ensure its being useful, solid, and respectable, must proceed from the working classes themselves, must be the fruit of their exertions, their energy, their sagacity, their experience, their foresight. It must be supported by their contributions, and fed and nourished by their sacrifices. All they have to ask from Government is liberty of action and repression of fraud.

But has the time come when a *Caisse de Retraite* for the working classes is possible? I think it has. In order that an institution which brings new stability to the interests of a class should be established, a certain amount of anterior progress is necessary. It is necessary that a certain stage of civilisation should have been reached by the Society in the midst of which such an institution is to be established, a healthful atmosphere must be prepared for it. If I am not mistaken, it is to friendly societies, with the material resources which they create, and the spirit of association, the experience, the foresight, and the sense of dignity which they infuse into the working classes, that we are to owe the establishment of those kindred institutions which provide for the old age of the workman.

For if you observe what is going on in England, you will be satisfied that all such things are bound up together and depend upon each other, and that one step of progress, in order to be attainable, must be preceded by another step of progress.

In England all the adults to whom it is an object to join benefit societies have done so of their own accord; and that is a point of very great importance, seeing that operations of this kind require

to be conducted on a great scale, and according to the law of averages.

These societies are possessed of large accumulated capitals, and have, besides, considerable annual revenues.

We cannot help thinking that, with the advance of civilisation, the prodigious sums which these societies now require to pay to their members will become proportionally smaller and smaller.

Good health is one of the benefits which civilisation develops. The healing art makes progress; machinery performs the harder and more painful part of labour; longevity increases. All these causes tend to lessen the calls on such associations.

A still more decisive and infallible symptom is the disappearance of great commercial crises in England. Such convulsions have had their origin sometimes in sudden manias with which the English are now and then seized for enterprises which are more than hazardous, and which entail a great loss of capital; sometimes they arise from great fluctuations in the price of food, the consequence of restrictive laws, for it is evident that when the price of bread and butcher's meat is very high, all the resources of the people are absorbed in the purchase of necessities, and other branches of trade languish, and a stoppage of manufactures is the inevitable result.

The first of these causes is now disappearing under the teachings of experience and public discussion; and we can already foresee that the English nation, which in former days threw itself into American loans, Mexican mines, and railway schemes with such sheep-like credulity, will now be much less a dupe than others to Californian illusions.

What shall I say of Free Trade, the triumph of which is due to Mr Cobden, not to Sir Robert Peel;—for the apostle would always have called forth a statesman, but the statesman could not have dispensed with the apostle. Here, then, we have a new power ushered into the world, which I hope will go far to do away with commercial stoppages and convulsions. Restriction has the admitted tendency and effect of placing many of the manufactures of the country, and, consequently, part of its population, in a precarious situation. As those piled-up waves which a transient force keeps for a moment above the level of the sea have a constant tendency to descend, so factitious industries, surrounded on every side by victorious competition, have a constant tendency to collapse. A modification in a single article of a single home or foreign tariff may bring ruin to them; and then comes a crisis. The varia-

tions in the price of a commodity, moreover, are much greater when you limit the field of competition. Surround a department, or a district, with custom-houses, and you render the fluctuation of prices much more marked. Liberty acts on the principle of insurance. In different countries, and in successive years, it compensates bad harvests by good ones. It sustains prices thus brought back to the average. It is a levelling and equalizing force. It contributes to stability, and it combats instability, which is the great source of convulsions and stoppages. There is no exaggeration in asserting that the first fruit of Mr Cobden's work will be to lessen many of those dangers which gave rise, in England, to friendly societies.

Mr Cobden has undertaken another task which will have a not less beneficial influence on the stability of the labourer's lot, and I doubt not he will succeed in it; for good service in the cause of truth is always triumphant. I refer to his efforts for the suppression of war, or, what is the same thing, for the infusion of the spirit of peace into that public opinion by which the question of peace or war comes always to be decided. War constitutes always the greatest disturbing force to which a nation can be subjected in its industry, in its commerce, in the disposal of its capital, even in its tastes. Consequently, it is a powerful cause of derangement and uneasiness to those classes who have difficulty in changing their employment. The more, of course, this disturbing force is lessened, the less onerous will the burdens be which fall upon benefit societies.

On the other hand, by dint of progress, by the mere lapse of time, the resources of these societies will be extended; and a day will come when they can undertake something more decisive—with a view to lessen the instability which is inherent in human affairs. These societies might then be transformed into *Caisses de Retraite*, or institutions for old age, and this will undoubtedly happen, since it is the ardent and universal desire of the working classes that it should be so.

And it is worthy of remark, that while material circumstances thus pave the way for such a transformation, moral circumstances arising from the influence of these very societies tend in the same direction. These societies develop among the working classes habits, qualities, and virtues, the possession and diffusion of which are in this respect an essential preliminary. When we examine the matter closely, we must be convinced that the creation of such

societies presupposes a very advanced stage of civilisation. They are at once its effect and its reward. They could, in fact, have no existence if men had not been previously in the habit of meeting, of acting in concert, and of managing in common their own affairs; they could not exist if men were prone to vices which induce premature old age; nor could they exist were the working classes brought to think that everything is fair as against the public, and that a common fund is the object at which every one intent on fraud may legitimately take aim.

In order that the establishment of *Caisses de Retraite* should not give rise to discord and misunderstanding, the working classes should be made to feel that they must depend upon nobody but themselves; that the common fund must be voluntarily created by those who are to have the benefit of it; and that it is supremely unjust and anti-social to call for co-operation from other classes, who are to have no share in the advantage, and who can only be made to concur by means of the tax-gatherer, that is to say, by means of force. Now, we have not yet got that length—so far from it that the frequent appeals to the State show us but too plainly what are the hopes and pretensions of the working classes. They think that their benefit society should be fed and alimanted by State subventions like that for public functionaries. And thus it is that one abuse always gives rise to another.

But if these *Caisses de Retraite* are to be maintained exclusively by the parties interested, may it not be said that they exist already, seeing that life assurance companies present combinations which enable every workman to provide for the future by the sacrifice of the present?

I have dwelt at great length upon friendly societies and *Caisses de Retraite*, although these institutions are only indirectly connected with the subject of this chapter. I have given way to the desire to exhibit mankind marching gradually on to the conquest of stability, or rather (for stability implies something stationary), emerging victorious from their struggle with *uncertainty*—uncertainty, that standing menace which mars all the enjoyments of life, that sword of Damocles which seems so fatally suspended over the human destinies. That this menace may be progressively and indefinitely rendered less formidable by reducing to an average the risks and chances of all times, of all places, and of all men, is certainly one of the most admirable social harmonies which can be presented to the view of the philosophic economist.

We must not, however, conclude that this victory depends upon these two institutions, the establishment of which may be more or less accidental. No; did experience even demonstrate these institutions to be impracticable, the human race would not the less find its way to fixity. It is enough to know that uncertainty is an evil, in order to be assured that it will be incessantly, and, sooner or later, successfully, combated; for such is the law of our nature.

If, as we have seen, the system of remunerating labour by wages is, as regards stability, a more advanced form of association between capital and labour, it still leaves too much room for the uncertain. As long as he continues to work, the labourer knows on what he has to depend. But how long will he have employment, and how long will he be fit for work? This is what he is ignorant of, and, as regards his future, it places before him a fearful problem for solution. The uncertainty which affects the capitalist is different. With him it is not a question of life or death. "I shall always derive an interest from my means; but will that interest be higher or lower?" That is the question which affects capital or anterior labour.

Sentimental philanthropists who see in this a frightful inequality which they desire to get rid of by artificial, sometimes by unjust and violent, means, do not consider that after all we cannot change the nature of things. Anterior labour must necessarily have more security than present labour, simply for this reason, that products already created must always present more certain resources than products which are yet to be created; that services already rendered, received, and estimated, present a more solid foundation for the future than services which are still in the state of supply. If you are not surprised that of two fishermen, the one who, having long laboured and saved, possesses lines, nets, boats, and some previous supply of fish, is more at ease as regards his future than the other who has absolutely nothing but his willingness to take part in the work, why should you be astonished that the social order presents to a certain extent the same differences? In order to justify the envy, the jealousy, the absolute spitefulness with which the labourer regards the capitalist, it would be necessary to conclude that the relative stability of the one is caused by the instability of the other. But it is the reverse which is true. It is precisely the capital which pre-exists in the hands of one man which is the guarantee of the wages of another, however insufficient that guar-

antee may appear. But for that capital, the uncertainty of the labourer would be still greater and more striking. Would the increase, and the extension to all, of that uncertainty be any advantage to the labourer?

Two men run equal risks, which we may represent, for each, as equal to 40. One of them succeeds so well, by his labour and his foresight, that he reduces the risks which affect him to 10. Those of his companion from the same cause, and in consequence of a mysterious solidarity, are reduced, not to 10, but to 20. What can be more just than that the man who has the greater merit should reap the greater reward? What more admirable than that the other should profit by the virtues of his neighbour? Now, this is just what philanthropy repudiates under the pretext that such an order of things is opposed to equality.

Suppose that one fine day the old fisherman should thus address his companion: "You have neither boat, nor nets, nor any instrument to fish with, except your hands, and you are likely to make but a poor business of it. You have no stock of provisions, and it is poor work to fish with an empty stomach. Come along with me—it is your interest as well as mine. It is yours, for I will give you a share of the fish which we take, and, whatever the quantity be, it will at least be greater than the produce of your isolated exertions. It is my interest also, for the additional quantity caught with your assistance will be greater than the share I will have to give you. In short, the union of your labour with my labour and capital, as compared with their isolated action, will produce a *surplus*, and it is the division of this surplus which explains how association may be of advantage to both of us."

They proceed in this way in the first instance; but afterwards the young fisher will prefer to receive every day a fixed quantity of fish. His uncertain and fluctuating profits are thus converted into wages, without the advantages of association being destroyed, and, by stronger reason, without the association itself being dissolved.

And it is in such circumstances as these that the pretended philanthropy of the Socialists comes to declaim against the tyranny of boats and nets, against the situation, naturally less uncertain, of him who possesses them, and who has come to possess them just because he has constructed them in order to obviate this uncertainty! It is in such circumstances that they endeavour to persuade the destitute young fisherman that he is



the victim of his *voluntary* arrangement with the old fisherman, and that he ought instantly to return to his state of isolation !

To assert that the future of the capitalist is less uncertain than that of the workman, is just to assert that the man who already possesses is in a better situation than the man who does not yet possess. It is so, and it must be so, for it is for this very reason that men aspire to possess.

The tendency, then, is for men to cease being workmen in receipt of wages in order to become capitalists. This progress is in conformity with human nature. What workman does not desire to have tools of his own, a stock of his own, a warehouse, a workshop, a field, a dwelling-house, of his own ? What workman but aspires to become an employer ? Who is not delighted to command after having long obeyed ? Do the great laws of the economic world, does the natural play of the social organs, favour or oppose this tendency ? This is the last question which we shall examine in connexion with the subject of wages.

Can its solution be attended with any doubt ?

Let us revert once more to the necessary evolution of production : gratuitous utility substituting itself incessantly for onerous utility ; human efforts constantly diminishing in relation to each result, and, when rendered disposable, embarking in new enterprises ; every hour's labour corresponding to an always increasing amount of enjoyment. How, from these premises, can we fail to deduce a progressive increase of *useful effects* to be distributed, consequently a sustained amelioration of the labourer's condition, consequently, also, an endless increase and progression of that amelioration ?

For here the effect having become a cause, we see progress not only advance, but become accelerated by its advance ; *vires acquirere eundo*. In point of fact, from century to century accumulation becomes more easy, as the remuneration of labour becomes more ample. Then accumulation increases capital, increases the demand for labour, and causes an elevation of wages. This rise of wages, in its turn, facilitates accumulation and the transformation of the paid labourer into a capitalist. Between the remuneration of labour and the accumulation of capital, then, there is a constant action and reaction, which is always favourable to the labouring class, always tending to relieve that class from the yoke of urgent necessity.

It may be said, perhaps, that I have brought together here all that can dazzle the hopes of the working classes, and that I have concealed all that could cause them discouragement. If there are

tendencies towards equality, it may be said, there are also tendencies towards inequality. Why do you not analyze the whole, in order to explain the true situation of the labouring classes, and thus bring science into accord with the melancholy facts to which it seems to shut its eyes? You show us gratuitous utility substituted for onerous utility, the gifts of God falling more and more into the domain of community, and, by that very fact, human labour obtaining a continually increasing recompense. From this increase of remuneration you deduce an increased facility of accumulation, and from this facility of accumulation a new increase of remuneration, leading to new and still more abundant accumulations, and so on *ad infinitum*. It may be that this system is as logical as it is optimistic; it may be that we are not in a situation to oppose to it a scientific refutation. But where are the facts which confirm it? Where do we find realized this emancipation from paid labour? Is it in the great centres of manufactures? Is it among the agricultural labourers? And if your theoretical predictions are not accomplished, is not this the reason, that alongside the economic laws which you invoke, there are other laws which act in an opposite direction, and of which you say nothing. For instance, why do you tell us nothing of that competition which takes place among workmen, and which forces them to accept of lower wages; of that urgent want of the necessities of life which presses upon the labourer, and obliges him to submit to the conditions of the capitalist, so that, in fact, it is the most destitute, famished, isolated, and consequently the most clamant and exacting workman who fixes the rate of wages for all? And if, in spite of so many obstacles, the condition of our unfortunate fellow-citizens comes to be improved, why do you not show us that law of population which steps in with its fatal action, multiplying the multitude, stirring up competition, increasing the supply of labour, deciding the controversy in favour of the capitalist, and reducing the workman to receive, for twelve or sixteen hours' labour, only *what is indispensable* (that, forsooth, is the consecrated phrase) *to the maintenance of life*?

If I have not touched upon all these phases of the question, the reason is, that it is scarcely possible to include everything within the limits of a single chapter. I have already explained the general law of Competition, and we have seen that that law is far from furnishing any class, especially the poorer class, with serious reasons for discouragement. I shall, by-and-by, explain

the law of Population, which will be found, I hope, in its general effects, not more severe. It is not my fault if each great solution—such, for example, as the future of a whole class of men—cannot be educed from one isolated economic law, and consequently from one chapter of this work, but must be educed from the aggregate of these laws, or from the work taken as a whole.

And here I must remind the reader of a distinction, which is by no means a subtlety, that when we have to do with an effect, we must take good care not to attribute it to the action of general and providential laws, if, on the contrary, it be found to proceed from a violation of these very laws.

I by no means ignore the calamities which, under all forms,—excessive labour, insufficient wages, uncertainty as to the future, a feeling of inferiority,—bear hard upon those of our fellow-citizens who have not yet been able, by the acquisition of Property, to raise themselves to a higher and more comfortable condition. But, then, we must acknowledge that uncertainty, destitution, and ignorance constitute the starting point of the whole human race; and this being so, the question, it seems to me, is to discover,—*1st*, If the general providential laws do not tend to relieve all classes from the weight of this triple yoke; *2dly*, If the conquests already secured by the more advanced classes do not constitute a facility prepared beforehand for the classes which yet lag behind. If the answer to these questions be in the affirmative, we may conclude that the social harmony is established, and that the ways of Providence are vindicated, if, indeed, they needed vindication.

Man being endowed with discretion and free will, the beneficent laws of Providence can profit him only while he conforms himself to their operation; and although I affirm that man's nature is perfectible, I must not be understood to assert that he makes progress when he misunderstands or violates these laws. Thus, I maintain that transactions which are natural, free, voluntary, and exempt from fraud or violence, have in themselves a principle of progress for all. But that is not to affirm that progress is inevitable, and must spring from war, monopoly, or imposture. I maintain that wages have a tendency to rise, that this rise facilitates saving, and that saving, in its turn, raises wages. But if the class which lives by wages, in consequence of habits of dissipation and debauchery, neutralize at the outset this cause of progressive effects, I do not say that these effects will exhibit themselves in the same way, for the contrary is implied in my affirmation.

In order to bring the scientific deduction to the test of facts, we must take two epochs ; for example, 1750 and 1850.

We must first of all establish what, at these two periods, was the proportion of *prolétaires* to *propriétaires*—of the men who live by wages without having any realized property, to the men in the actual possession of property. We shall find, I presume, that for a century the number of people who possess some resources has much increased relatively to the number of those who are in possession of no resources whatever.

We must then discover the specific situation of each of these two classes, which we cannot do otherwise than by observing the enjoyments and satisfactions which they possess ; and very probably we shall find that in our day they derive a greater amount of real satisfaction and enjoyment, the one from accumulated labour, the other from present labour, than was possible in the middle of the last century.

If the respective and relative progress of these classes, especially of the working class, has not been what we could wish, we must then inquire whether it has not been more or less retarded by acts of injustice and violence, by errors, by passions—in a word, by faults incident to mankind, by contingent causes which we cannot confound with what are called the great and constant laws of the social economy. Have we not, for example, had wars and revolutions which might have been avoided ? And have not these atrocities, in the first instance, absorbed and afterwards dissipated an incalculable amount of capital, consequently diminished the funds for the payment of wages, and retarded the emancipation of the working classes ? Have they not diverted capital from its legitimate employment, seeking to derive from it, not enjoyment, but destruction ? Have we not had monopolies, privileges, and unequal taxation ? Have we not had absurd expenditure, ridiculous fashions, and a loss of power, which can be attributed only to puerile tastes and prejudices ?

And what has been the consequence ?

There are general laws to which man may conform himself, or which he may violate.

If it be incontestable that Frenchmen, during the last hundred years, have frequently run counter to the natural order of social development ; if we cannot forbear to attribute to incessant wars, to periodical revolutions, to acts of injustice, to monopolies, to dissipation, to follies of all kinds, a fearful sacrifice of the power of capital and of labour ;

And if, on the other hand, in spite of all this, which is undeniable, we can establish another fact—namely, that during this same period of a hundred years the class possessed of property has been recruited from the labouring class, and that both have at the same time had at their command a greater amount of satisfaction and enjoyment—do we not, by rigorous deduction, arrive at this conclusion, namely, that,

*The general laws of the social world are in harmony, and that they tend in all respects to the improvement of the human race?*

For since, after a period of a hundred years, during which these laws have been so frequently and so deeply violated, men find themselves in a more advanced state of comfort and wellbeing, the action of these laws must be beneficent, and sufficiently so even to compensate the action of disturbing causes.

How indeed could it be otherwise? Is there not something equivocal, or rather redundant, in the expression, *beneficent general laws*? How can general laws be other than beneficent? When God placed in man's heart an irresistible impulse to what is good, and, to enable him to discern it, imparted to him sufficient light to enable him to rectify his errors, from that moment He decreed that the human race was perfectible, and that, in spite of many errors, difficulties, deceptions, oppressions, and oscillations, mankind should still march onwards on the road of progress. This onward march, while error, deception, and oppression are absent, is precisely what we denominate the general laws of the social order. Errors and oppressions are what I call the violation of these laws, or disturbing causes. It is not possible, then, to doubt that the one should be beneficent, and the other the reverse, unless we go the length of doubting whether disturbing causes may not act in a manner more regular and permanent than general laws. Now that conclusion would contradict the premises. Our intelligence, which may be deceived, can rectify its errors, and it is evident that, the social world being constituted as it is, error might sooner or later be checked by Responsibility, and that, sooner or later, oppression must be destroyed by Solidarity. Whence it follows that disturbing causes are not in their nature permanent, and it is for that reason that the laws which countervail the action of such disturbances merit the name of General laws.

In order to conform ourselves to general laws, it is necessary to be acquainted with them. Allow me then to enlarge a little on the relations, so ill understood, of the capitalist and the labourer.

Capital and labour are indispensable to one another. Perpetually confronting each other, their adjustment constitutes one of the most important and most interesting subjects which can come under the observation of the economist. And it is a solemn consideration that erroneous notions and superficial observations on this subject, if they become popular, may give rise to inveterate heartburnings, struggles, and bloodshed.

Now, I express my deliberate conviction when I say that for some years the public mind has been saturated with the falsest theories on this subject. We have been told that free and voluntary transactions between the capitalist and the labourer lead, not accidentally, but necessarily, to monopoly for the capitalist, and oppression for the labourer; from which the obvious conclusion is, that liberty ought everywhere to be put down and stifled; for, I repeat, that when men have accused liberty of engendering monopoly, they have pretended not only to assert a fact, but to establish a law. In support of this thesis they have appealed to the action of machinery and of competition. M. de Sismondi was, I believe, the founder, and M. Buret the propagator, of these unhappy doctrines, although the latter has stated his conclusions very timidly, and the former has not ventured to state any conclusion at all. But bolder spirits have succeeded them, who, after trumpeting their hatred to capitalists and men of property, after having got the masses to accept as an incontestable axiom the discovery that *liberty leads inevitably to monopoly*, have, whether designedly or not, induced the people to raise their hands against this accursed liberty.\* Four days of a sanguinary struggle brought emancipation, without restoring confidence; for do we not constantly discover the hand of the State (obedient in this to vulgar prejudices) ever ready to interpose in the relations of capital and labour?

We have already deduced the action of competition from our theory of value, and we shall do the same thing as regards the effects of machinery.† We must limit ourselves in this place to an exposition of some general ideas upon the subject of the reciprocal relations of the capitalist and the labourer.

The fact with which our pessimist reformers are much struck in the outset is, that the capitalists are richer than the workmen, and

\* *Émeutes* of June 1848.

† The chapter, "*Des Machines*," is one of those included in the author's list of intended additions, which he did not live to write. (See *Notice of Life and Writings*, etc., Part I., p. xxxviii.)—TRANSLATOR.

obtain a greater amount of satisfactions and enjoyments ; whence it results that they appropriate to themselves a greater, and consequently an unjust, share of the product elaborated by their joint exertions. It is in this direction that their statistics, more or less impartial, professing to explain the condition of the working classes, tend.

These gentlemen forget that absolute poverty and destitution is the inevitable starting-point of the human race, and that men continue inevitably in this state until they have acquired something for themselves, or have had something acquired for them by others. To remark, in the gross, that capitalists are better off than mere workmen, is simply to assert that those who have something, have more than those who have nothing.

The questions which the workman ought to ask himself are not, "Does my labour give me much ? Does it give me little ? Does it give me as much as it gives to another ? Does it give me what I desire ?" The questions he should ask himself are these : "Does my labour give me less because I employ it in the service of the capitalist ? Would it give me more if I worked in a state of isolation, or if I associated my labour with that of other workmen as destitute as myself ? I am ill situated, but would I be better off were there no such thing as capital in the world ? If the part which I obtain in consequence of my arrangement with capital is greater than what I would obtain without that arrangement, what reason have I to complain ? And then, according to what laws would our respective shares go on increasing or diminishing were transactions free ? If it be of the nature of these transactions to allow me, in proportion as the total product to be divided increases, to obtain a continually increasing proportion of the excess (Part I., c. vii., p. 183), then in place of breathing hatred against capital, ought I not to treat it as a friend ? If it be indisputably established that the presence of capital is favourable to my interests, and that its absence would be death to me, am I very prudent or well-advised in calumniating it, frightening it away, and forcing its dissipation or flight ?" In the discussion which precedes the bargain, an inequality of situation is constantly alleged, because capital can afford to wait, but labour cannot. The one upon which the greatest pressure bears must give way to the other, so that the capitalist in reality fixes the rate of wages.

Undoubtedly, looking at the surface of things, he who has created a stock, and who in consequence of this foresight can wait on, has

the advantage in the bargain. Taking even an isolated transaction, the man who says, *Do ut facias*, is not in such a hurry to come to a conclusion as the man who replies, *Facio ut des*. For, when a man can say *do*, he possesses something to give; and when he possesses something to give, he can wait.\*

We must not, however, lose sight of this, that value has the same principle, whether it reside in the service or in the product. If one of the parties says *do*, in place of *facio*, it is because he has had the foresight to execute the *facio* beforehand. In reality, it is the service on both sides which is the measure of the value. Now, if delay for present labour is a suffering, for anterior labour it is a loss. We must not then suppose that the man who says *do*, the capitalist, will amuse himself (above all if we consider the aggregate of his transactions) by deferring the bargain. In point of fact, do we see much capital idle for this reason? Do many manufacturers stop their mills, or shipowners delay their voyages, or agriculturists defer their harvests, on purpose to depreciate wages, and get hold of their workmen by means of famine?

But without denying that the position of the capitalist in relation to the workman is favourable in this respect, is there not something else to be considered with reference to their arrangements? For instance, is it not a circumstance quite in favour of *present labour* that *accumulated labour* loses value by mere lapse of time? I have elsewhere alluded to this phenomenon. But it is important to solicit the reader's attention again to it in this place, seeing how great an influence it has upon the remuneration of present labour.

That which in my opinion renders Adam Smith's theory, that *value comes from labour*, false, or at least incomplete, is that this theory assigns to value only one element, whilst, being a relation, it has necessarily two. Besides, if value springs exclusively from labour, and represents it, it would be proportionate to that labour, which is contrary to all observed facts.

No; value comes from service received and rendered; and the service depends as much, if not more, on the pains saved to the man who receives it, as upon the pains taken by the man who renders it. In this respect the most common facts confirm our reasoning. When I purchase a product, I may indeed ask myself, "How long time has it taken to make it?" And this undoubt-

\* For an explanation of these terms, borrowed from the Civil Law, see Part I., p. 146.—TRANSLATOR.



edly is one of the elements of my estimate of its value. But again, and above all, I ask, "How long time would it take me to make it? How long time have I taken to make the thing which is asked from me in exchange?" When I purchase a service, I not only ask how much it will cost another to render that service to me, but how much it would cost me to render that service to myself.

These personal questions, and the answers which they call forth, are such essential elements in every estimate of value, that they most frequently determine it.

Try to purchase a diamond which has been found by chance. The seller will transfer to you very little labour, but he will ask from you a great deal. Why, then, should you consent to this? Because you take into account the labour which it saves you, the labour which you would be obliged to undergo in order to satisfy by any other means your desire to possess a diamond.

When an exchange, then, takes place between *anterior labour* and *present labour*, it is not at all on the footing of their intensity or duration, but on that of their value, that is to say, of the service which they render, and their relative utility. If the capitalist shall say, "Here is a product which cost me formerly ten hours' labour;" and if the labourer be in a situation to reply, "I can produce the same thing in five hours," the capitalist would be forced to give up the difference; for I repeat, that it does not concern the present acquirer of a commodity to ask how much labour it formerly cost to produce it. What concerns him is to know what labour it will save him now, what service he is to expect from it.

A capitalist, in a general sense, is a man who, having foreseen that such or such a service would be in demand, has prepared beforehand to satisfy this demand by incorporating the value in a commodity.

When labour has been thus expended by anticipation, in expectation of future remuneration, we cannot tell whether, on a definite future day, it will render exactly the same service, or save the same pains, or preserve, consequently, a uniform value. We cannot even hazard a probable conjecture as to this. The commodity may be very *recherché*, very difficult to procure in any other way; it may come to render services which will be better appreciated, or appreciated by more people; it may acquire an increasing value with time,—in other words, it may exchange for a continually increasing proportion of present labour. Thus it is not impossible

that such a product, a diamond for example, a violin of Stradivarius, a picture of Raphaël, a vine-plant from the Château-Lafitte, may come to exchange for a thousand times more labour than they cost. In fact it just comes to this, that the anterior labour is well remunerated in these cases, because it renders a great amount of service.

The contrary may also happen. A commodity which has cost four hours' labour may come to exchange for one which has cost only three hours' labour of equal intensity.

But—and this appears to me extremely important as regards the interests of the working classes, of those classes who aspire so ardently to get rid of their present state of uncertainty—although the two alternatives we have stated are both possible, and each may be realized in its turn, although accumulated labour may sometimes gain, and sometimes lose value, in relation to present labour, the first alternative, nevertheless, is so rare as to be considered accidental and exceptional; while the second is the result of a general law which is inherent in the very organization of man. That man, with all his intellectual and experimental acquisitions, is of a progressive nature, is, at least industrially speaking (for, in a moral point of view, the assertion might be disputed), beyond doubt. It is beyond doubt that the greater part of those commodities which exacted formerly a given amount of labour, exact at the present day a less amount, in consequence of improvements in machinery, and the gratuitous intervention of natural forces; and we may assert, without hesitation, that in each period of ten years, for example, a given quantity of labour will accomplish, in the majority of cases, greater results than the same quantity of labour could have accomplished in the preceding decennial period.

What is the conclusion to be drawn from this? Obviously, that anterior labour goes on constantly deteriorating in value relatively to present labour; that in every act of exchange it becomes necessary to give, of the first, a greater number of hours than you receive of the second; and this without any injustice, but simply to maintain the equivalence of services. This is a consequence which progress forces upon us.

You say to me, "Here is a machine; it was made ten years ago but it is still new. It cost 1000 days' work to make it. I will give it to you in exchange for an equal number of days' labour." To this I reply, "Within the last ten years so many new tools have been invented, and so many new processes discovered, that

I can now construct, or, what comes to the same thing, get constructed for me, an equally good machine, with an expenditure of only 600 days' labour. I will not, therefore, give you more than 600 for yours." "But I should in this way lose 400 days' labour." "No," I reply; "for 6 days' work now are worth 10 formerly. At all events, what you offer me for 1000 I can now procure for 600." This ends the debate; if the lapse of time has deteriorated the value of your labour, there is no reason why I should bear the loss.

Again you say to me, "Here is a field. In order to bring it to its present state of productiveness, I and my ancestors have expended 1000 days' labour. They were unacquainted, no doubt, with the use of axe, and saw, and spade, and did all by muscular exertion. But no matter; give me first of all 1000 of your days' work, as an equivalent for the 1000 which I give to you, and then add 300 as the value of the productive power of the soil, and you shall have the field." I answer, "I will not give you 1300, or even 1000, days' labour for it; and here are my reasons: There are on the surface of the globe an indefinite number of productive powers which are destitute of value. We are now accustomed to handle spade, and axe, and saw, and plough, and employ many other means of abridging labour, and rendering it more productive; so that, with 600 days' work, I can either bring an uncultivated field into the state in which yours is, or (which comes absolutely to the same thing, as far as I am concerned) *I can procure myself, by an act of exchange, all the advantages which you reap from your field.* I will give you, then, 600 days, and no more." "In that case, not only should I have no profit from the pretended value of the productive powers of the soil; I should not even be reimbursed for the actual labour which I and my ancestors have devoted to the cultivation of this field. Is it not strange that I should be accused by Ricardo of selling the powers of nature; by Senior of intercepting the gifts of God; by all the Economists of being a monopolist; by Proudhon of being a robber; while in reality I am only a dupe?" You are no more a dupe than a monopolist. You receive the equivalent of what you give; and it is neither natural, nor just, nor possible, that rude labour performed with the hand centuries ago should exchange, day for day, against the more intelligent and productive labour of the present time.

Thus we see that by an admirable effect of the social mechanism, when anterior and present labour are brought into juxtaposition,

and when the business is to know in what proportion the joint product of both is to be divided, the specific superiority of the one and of the other is taken into account; and they participate in the distribution according to the relative services which they render. In exceptional cases, it may happen that this superiority is on the side of anterior labour. But in the great majority of cases, it is otherwise; and the nature of man and the law of progress cause the superiority to be manifested on the side of present labour. Progress is advanced by the latter; and the deterioration falls upon capital.

Independently of this result, which shows how vain and hollow the declamations of our modern reformers on the pretended *tyranny of capital* are, there is another consideration still more fitted to extinguish in the hearts of the working classes that factitious hatred of other classes, which it has been attempted but with too much success to light up.

The consideration I refer to is this:

Capital, however far it may carry its pretensions, and however successful it may be in its endeavours to ensure the triumph of these pretensions, can never place labour in a worse situation than it would occupy in a state of isolation. In other words, capital is always more favourable to labour by its presence than by its absence.

Let us revert to the example which I gave a little ago.

Two men live by fishing. One of them has nets, lines, a boat, and some provisions to enable him to wait for the fruit of his labour. The other has nothing but his personal exertions. It is their interest to associate.\* Whatever may be the terms on which they agree to share the produce, the condition of either of these two fishermen, whether the rich one or the poor one, never can be made worse, and for this obvious reason, that the moment either of them finds association disadvantageous as compared with isolation, he may return to isolation.

In savage as in pastoral, in agricultural as in industrial life, the relations of capital and labour are always represented by this example.

The absence of capital is a limit which is always within the power of labour. If the pretensions of capital go the length of rendering joint action less profitable for labour than isolated action, labour can take refuge in isolation, an asylum always open (except in a state of slavery) to voluntary association found to be disadvantageous. Labour can always say to capital, Rather

\* See Part I., chapter iv.

than work jointly on the conditions which you offer me, I prefer to work alone.

It may be objected that this resource is illusory and ridiculous, that to labour isolated action is forbidden by a radical impossibility, and that to dispense with tools and instruments would be fatal to it.

This is no doubt true; but it just confirms the truth of my assertion, that even if capital carries its exactions to an extreme limit, it still benefits labour by the very fact of its being associated with it. Labour can be brought into a worse condition than the worst association only when all association ceases and capital retires. Cease, then, apostles of misfortune, to cry out against the tyranny of capital, since you allow that its action is always—in a greater or less degree, no doubt, but always—beneficent. Singular tyranny, whose power is beneficial to all those who desire to feel its effects, and is hurtful only when withdrawn.

But the objector may still insist that, although this might be so in the earlier stages of society, capital has at the present day invaded everything. It occupies every post, it lays hold of every field. The working man has no longer either air, or space, or soil to put his foot on, or stone to lay his head on, without the permission of capital. He is subject to its inexorable law, and you would afford him no refuge but isolation, which you admit is death!

All this displays a deplorable confusion of ideas, and a total ignorance of the social economy.

If, as has been said, capital has possessed itself of all the forces of nature, of all lands, of all space, I would ask for whose profit? For the profit of the capitalist, no doubt. But then, how does it happen that a simple workman, who has nothing but his muscular powers, can obtain in France, in England, in Belgium, a thousand, a million times greater amount of satisfaction and enjoyment than he could have reaped in a state of isolation,—not on the social hypothesis which you repudiate, but on that other hypothesis which you cherish and cling to, that which presupposes capital to have been guilty of no usurpation.

I shall continue to entertain this view of the subject, until your new science can give a better account of it; for I am convinced I have assigned valid reasons for the conclusion at which I have arrived.—(Part I., chapter vii.)

Take the first workman you meet with on the streets of Paris.

Find out the amount of his earnings and the amount of enjoyments he can procure himself, and when you have fired off both against that monster, capital, I will step in, and thus address the workman :

We are about to annihilate capital and all its works ; and I am going to place you in the midst of a hundred thousand acres of the most fertile land, which I shall give you in full property and possession, with everything above and below ground. You will not be elbowed by any capitalist. You will have the full enjoyment of the four natural rights of hunting, fishing, reaping the fruits, and pasturing the land. True, you will have no capital ; for if you had, you would be in precisely the situation you censure in the case of others. But you will no longer have reason to complain of landlordism, capitalism, individualism, usurers, stockjobbers, bankers, monopolists. The land will be absolutely and entirely yours. Think if you would like to accept this position.

This workman would, no doubt, imagine at first that he had obtained the fortune of a monarch. On reflection, however, he would probably say : Well, let us calculate. Even when a man possesses a hundred thousand acres of land, he must live. Now, how does the *bread* account stand in the two situations ? At present I earn half-a-crown a day. At the present price of corn I can have three bushels a week, just as if I myself sowed and reaped. Were I proprietor of a hundred thousand acres of land, at the utmost I could not, without capital, produce three bushels of corn in two years, and in the interim I might die of famine. . . . I shall, therefore, stick to my wages.

The truth is, we do not consider sufficiently the progress which the human race must have made, to be able even to maintain the wretched existence of our workmen.\* . . . . .

Amelioration of the labourer's lot found in wages themselves and in the natural laws by which wages are regulated.

1st, The labourer tends to rise to the rank of a capitalist and employer.

2d, Wages tend to rise.

*Corollary.*—The transition from the state of a paid workman to that of an employer becomes constantly less desirable, and more easy. . . . .

\* The manuscript brought from Rome stops here. What is subjoined was found among the papers left by the author in Paris. It indicates how he intended to terminate and sum up this chapter.—EDITOR.

## XV.

### SAVING.

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*To save* is not to accumulate quantities of corn, of game, or of crown-pieces. This hoarding-up of material and consumable commodities, which must necessarily from its nature be restrained within narrow bounds, represents only *the saving* of man in a state of isolation. All that we have hitherto said of value, of services, of relative wealth, shows us that, socially, saving, although it proceeds from the same source, develops itself differently and assumes another character.

*To save* is to interpose voluntarily an interval between the time when we render services to society and the time when we receive back from society equivalent services. A man, for example, may every day, from the time he is twenty until he is sixty, render to his neighbours professional services equal to four, and demand from them services only equal to three. In that case he reserves the power of drawing upon society in his old age, and when he can no longer work, for payment of the remaining fourth of his forty years' labour.

The circumstance that he has received and accumulated through a succession of years notes of acknowledgment consisting of bills of exchange, promissory notes, bank notes, money, is quite secondary, and belongs only to the form of the transaction. It has relation only to the means of execution. It changes neither the nature nor the consequences of saving. The illusion to which the intervention of money gives rise in this respect is not the less an illusion, although we are almost always the dupes of it.

In fact, it is with difficulty that we can avoid believing that the man who saves withdraws from circulation a certain amount of value, and, in consequence, does a certain amount of harm to society.

And here we encounter one of those apparent contradictions

which are at war with logic, one of those barriers which would seem to oppose an insurmountable obstacle to progress, one of those dissonances which gives us pain by appearing to call in question the Divine power and will.

On the one hand, we know that the human race can only extend itself, raise itself, improve itself, acquire leisure, stability, and, by consequence, intellectual development and moral culture, by the abundant creation and persevering accumulation of capital. It is this rapid augmentation of capital on which depends the demand for labour, the elevation of wages, and, consequently, the progress of men towards equality.

But, on the other hand, *to save* is not the opposite of *to spend*, and if the man who spends gives a fillip to industry and additional employment to labour, does the man who saves not do exactly the reverse? If every one set himself to economize as much as possible, we should see labour languish in the same proportion, and if all could be saved, we should have no fund for the employment of labour.

In such circumstances, what advice can we give? And what solid basis can political economy offer to morals, when we appear to be able to educe from the former only this contradictory and melancholy alternative :—

*"If you do not save, capital will not be replaced, but dissipated, the labouring class will be multiplied, while the fund for their remuneration will remain stationary; they will enter into competition with each other, and offer their services at a lower rate; wages will be depressed, and society will, in this respect, be on the decline. It will be on the decline also in another respect, for unless you save you will be without bread in your old age; you can no longer set your son out in the world, give a portion to your daughter, or enlarge your trade,"* etc.

*"If you do save, you diminish the fund for wages, you injure a great number of your fellow-citizens, you strike a blow at labour, which is the universal creator of human satisfactions, and you lower, consequently, the general level of humanity."*

Now these frightful contradictions disappear before the explanation which we have given of saving—an explanation founded upon the ideas to which our inquiries on the subject of value conducted us.

Services are exchanged for services.

Value is the appreciation of two services compared with each other.



In this view, *to save* is to have rendered a service, and allow time for receiving the equivalent service, or, in other words, to interpose an interval of time between the service rendered, and the service received.

Now, in what respect can a man do injury to society or to labour who merely abstains from drawing upon society for a service to which he has right? I can exact the value which is due to me upon the instant, or I may delay exacting it for a year. In that case, I give society a year's respite. During that interval, labour is carried on, and services are exchanged, just as if I did not exist. I have not by this means caused any disturbance. On the contrary, I have added one satisfaction more to the enjoyments of my fellow-citizens, and they possess it for a year gratuitously.

Gratuitously is not the word, for I must go on to describe the phenomenon.

The interval of time which separates the two services exchanged is itself the subject of a bargain, of an exchange, for it is possessed of *value*. It is the origin and explanation of *interest*.

A man, for instance, renders a present service. His wish is to receive the equivalent service only ten years hence. Here, then, is a value of which he refuses himself the immediate enjoyment. Now, it is of the nature of *value* to be able to assume all possible forms. With a determinate value, we are sure to obtain any imaginable service, whether productive or unproductive, of an equal value. He who delays for ten years to call in a debt, not only delays an enjoyment, but he delays the possibility of further production. It is on this account that he will meet with people in the world who are disposed to bargain for this delay. They will say to him: "You are entitled to receive immediately a certain value. It suits you to delay receiving it for ten years. Now, for these ten years, make over your right to me, place me in your room and stead. I shall receive for you the amount for which you are a creditor. I will employ it during these ten years in a productive enterprise, and repay you at the end of that time. By this means you will render me a *service*, and as every service has a value, which we estimate by comparing it with another service, we have only to estimate this service which I solicit from you, and so fix its *value*. This point being discussed and arranged, I shall have to repay you at the end of the ten years, not only the value of the service for which you are a creditor, but the value likewise of the service which you are about to render me."

It is the value of this temporary transference of values saved which we denominate *interest*.

For the same reason that a third party may desire that we should transfer to him, *for an onerous consideration*, the enjoyment of a value saved, the original debtor may also desire to enter into the same bargain. In both cases this is called *asking for credit*. To give credit is to give time for the acquittance of a debt, of a value; it is to deprive oneself of the enjoyment of that value in favour of another, it is to render a service, it is to acquire a title to an equivalent service.

But to revert to the economic effects of saving, now that we are acquainted with all the details of the phenomenon, it is very evident that it does no injury to general activity or to labour. Even when the man who economizes realizes his economy, and, in exchange for services rendered, receives hard cash, and hoards it, he does no harm to society, seeing that he has not been able to withdraw that amount of value from society without restoring to it equivalent values. I must add, however, that such hoarding is improbable and exceptional, inasmuch as it is detrimental to the personal interests of the man who would practise it. Money in the hands of such a man may be supposed to say this: "He who possesses me has rendered services to society, and has not been paid for them. I have been put into his hands to serve him as a warrant; I am at once an acknowledgment, a promise, and a guarantee. The moment he wills it, he can, by exhibiting and restoring me, receive back from society the services for which he is a creditor."

Now this man is in no hurry. Does it follow that he will continue to hoard his money? No; for we have seen that the lapse of time which separates two services exchanged becomes itself the subject of a commercial transaction. If the man who saves intends to remain ten years without drawing upon society for the services that are owing to him, his interest is to substitute a representative, in order to add to the value for which he is a creditor the value of this special service. Saving, then, implies in no shape actual hoarding.

Let moralists be no longer arrested by this consideration. . . .

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## XVI.

### POPULATION.

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I HAVE been longing to enter upon the subject of this chapter, were it for no other purpose than to have an opportunity of vindicating Malthus from the violent attacks which have been made upon him. It is scarcely credible that a set of writers of no reputation or ability, and whose ignorance is transparent in every page of their works, should, by echoing one another's opinions, have succeeded in lowering in public estimation a grave, conscientious, and philanthropic author; representing as absurd a theory which at all events deserves to be studied with serious attention.

It may be that I do not myself adopt all the opinions of Malthus. Every question has two phases; and I believe that Malthus may have fixed his regards too exclusively upon the sombre side. In my own economical studies and inquiries, I have been so frequently led to the conclusion, that *whatever is the work of Providence is good*, that when logic has seemed to force me to a different conclusion, I have been inclined to distrust my logic. I am aware that this faith in final causes is not unattended with danger to the mind of an inquirer. But this will not prevent me from acknowledging that there is a vast amount of truth in the admirable work of this economist, or from rendering homage to that ardent love of mankind by which every line of it is inspired.

Malthus, whose knowledge of the social economy was profound, had a clear view of all the ingenious mechanism with which nature has provided the human race to assure its onward march on the road of progress. And yet he believed that human progress might find itself entirely paralyzed by one principle, namely, the principle of Population. In contemplating the world, he gave way to the melancholy reflection, that "God appears to have taken great care of the species, and very little of the individual. In fact, as regards a certain class of animated beings, we see them endowed with a

fecundity so prolific, a power of multiplication so extraordinary, a profusion of germs so superabundant, that the destiny of the species would seem undoubtedly well assured, while that of the individuals of the species appears very precarious; for the whole of these germs cannot be brought to life and maturity. They must either fail to live, or must die prematurely."

"Man makes no exception to this law." [It is surprising that this should shock the Socialists, who have never done telling us that general must take precedence of individual right.] "This much is certain, that God has secured the continuance of the human race by providing it with a great power of reproduction. The numbers of mankind, then, would come naturally, but for prudence and foresight, to exceed what the earth could maintain. But man is endued with foresight, and it is his reason and his will which can alone interpose a check to this fatal progression."

Setting out from these premises, which you may dispute if you will, but which Malthus regarded as incontestable, he attached necessarily the highest value to the exercise of foresight. For there was no alternative;—man must either restrain voluntarily this excessive multiplication, or else he must become subject, like all the other species of living creatures, to the operation of positive or repressive checks.

Malthus, then, believed that he could never urge men too strongly to the exercise of foresight. His very philanthropy engaged him to exhibit in strong relief the fatal consequences of imprudent reproduction, in order to put men upon their guard. He said to them: If you multiply inconsiderately, you cannot avoid the chastisement which awaits you in some form or other, and always in a hideous form—famine, war, pestilence, etc. Benevolence, charity, poor-laws, and all other expedients, are but ineffectual remedies.

In his ardour, Malthus allowed an expression to escape him, which, when separated from the rest of his system, and from the sentiment which dictated it, may appear harsh. It occurred in the first edition of his work, which was then only a brochure, and has since become a book of four volumes. It was represented to him that his meaning in this objectionable passage might give rise to erroneous interpretations. He immediately suppressed it, and it has never since reappeared in any of the numerous editions of his *Essay on Population*.

But Mr Godwin, one of his opponents, had quoted this sup-

pressed passage, and the consequence was, that M. de Sismondi (a man who, with the best intentions in the world, has done much mischief) reproduced this unlucky sentence. The Socialists instantly laid hold of it, and on this they proceeded to try, condemn, and execute Malthus. Truly, they were much indebted to Sismondi's learning, for they had never themselves read either Malthus or Godwin.

The Socialists have thus represented an unguarded passage, which Malthus himself had suppressed, as the basis of his system. They repeat it *ad nauseam*. In a little 18mo volume, M. Pierre Leroux reproduced it at least forty times, and it forms the stock-in-trade of all our declamatory second-rate reformers.

The most celebrated and the most vigorous of that school of writers having written an article against Malthus, I happened one day to converse with him, and cited some opinions expressed in the Essay on Population. I thought I perceived that he was not acquainted with the work. I remarked to him, "You who have refuted Malthus, have you not read his book from beginning to end?" "I have not read it at all," he replied. "His whole system is to be found in one page, and is condensed in the famous 'arithmetical and geometrical progressions'—that is enough for me." "It seems to me," I said, "that you are jesting with the public, with Malthus, with truth, with conscience, and with yourself."

This is the way that opinions obtain currency with us. Fifty ignorant people repeat in chorus something spiteful and absurd, put forward by one more ignorant than themselves, and if it happens to have the least connexion with the fashionable opinions or passions of the hour, it is at once received as an axiom.

Science, however, it must be allowed, cannot enter on the solution of a problem with the settled intention of establishing a foregone conclusion, however consolatory. What should we think of a man who should sit down to the study of physiology, resolved beforehand to demonstrate that God has not willed that mankind should be afflicted with diseases? Were one physiologist to found a system on such a basis as this, and another to controvert it by an appeal to facts, the former would most likely fly into a rage, and tax his opponent with *impiety*; but it is difficult to believe that he would go the length of accusing his opponent himself of being the author of diseases.

This, however, is what has happened to Malthus. In a work

founded on facts and figures, he explained a law which has given great offence to our optimists ; and in their anxiety to ignore the existence of this law, they have attacked Malthus with rancorous virulence and flagrant bad faith, as if he had himself deliberately thrown in the way of mankind those obstacles which flowed, as he thought, from the principle of population. It would surely have been more philosophical to have proved simply that Malthus was mistaken, and that his pretended law had in reality no existence.

Population, we must allow, is one of a numerous class of subjects, which serve to remind us that man has frequently left him only a choice of evils. Whatever may have been its design, suffering has entered into the plan of Providence. Let us not, then, seek for harmony in the absence of evil, but in the tendency of evil to bring us back to what is good, and in the gradual contraction of its own domain. God has indued us with free will. It is necessary that we should *learn*,—which is a long and difficult process,—and then it is necessary that we should *act* on the knowledge thus acquired, which is not much less difficult. In this way we shall gradually emancipate ourselves from suffering, but without ever altogether escaping from it ; for even when we succeed completely in eluding chastisement, we have still to exercise the painful effort of foresight. In freeing ourselves from the one, we must submit ourselves to the other.

It is of no use to rebel against this order of things ; for it envelopes us ; it is the atmosphere in which we live and breathe ; and it is with this alternative of restriction or prevention before us, which we cannot get rid of, and cannot lose sight of, that we proceed, with Malthus, to enter upon the problem of population. On this great question I shall first of all assume the function of a mere reporter, and then give you my own views. If the laws of population can be comprised in a short aphorism, it will be a happy thing for the advancement and diffusion of the science. But if, from the number and the shifting nature of the postulates, we find that these laws refuse to be shut up in a brief and rigorous formula, we must acquiesce. Prolix exactitude is better than delusive brevity.

We have seen that progress consists in causing natural forces to co-operate more and more towards the satisfaction of our wants, so that, at each successive epoch, the same amount of utility is obtained, whilst to society is left either more leisure, or a greater

amount of disposable labour, to be applied to the acquisition of new enjoyments.

On the other hand, we have demonstrated that every fresh conquest we thus gain over nature, after having for a time brought additional profit to the inventor, never fails to become, by the operation of the law of competition, the common and gratuitous patrimony of mankind at large.

From these premises we should conclude that human happiness must be enlarged, and, at the same time, rapidly equalized. That it has not been so in reality, however, is a point beyond all dispute. There are in the world multitudes of unfortunate people, whose wretchedness has not been caused by their own misdeeds.

How are we to account for this ?

I believe it is owing to a multiplicity of causes. One of them is called *spoliation*, or, if you will, *injustice*. Economists have referred to it only incidentally, as implying some error, some false scientific notion. Engaged in the explanation of general laws, it is not their business, they think, to concern themselves with those laws, when they are not in operation, or are violated. Spoliation, however, has borne, and still bears, too prominent a share in human affairs to permit even economists to throw it aside as a consideration unworthy of being taken into account. What we have to do with here is not accidental thefts, petty larcenies, or isolated crimes. War, slavery, priestly impostures, privileges, monopolies, restrictions, abuses of taxation,—these are the more salient manifestations of spoliation. It is easy to see what influence disturbing forces of such magnitude must have exercised, and must still exercise by their presence, or the deep traces they have left behind them, on the inequality of conditions ; and it will be our business hereafter to estimate the vast extent of their effects.

But another cause which retards progress, and, above all, which hinders its extension to all classes, is, as some authors think, the principle of population.

And no doubt, if in proportion as wealth increases, the number of people among whom that wealth is to be divided increases also, and more rapidly, absolute wealth may be greater, and individual wealth less.

If, moreover, there be one species of services which everybody can render, like the services which require only muscular exertion, and if it be just the class whose business it is to render such services, the worst paid of all, which multiplies with the greatest

rapidity, we must conclude that labour creates for itself a fatal competition. The lowest class will never benefit by progress, if that class increases faster than it can spread and distribute itself.

You see, then, how important the principle of population is.

Malthus has reduced the principle to this formula :

*Population has a tendency to keep on a level with the means of subsistence.*

I cannot help remarking in passing that it is surprising that the honour and responsibility of enunciating this principle, be it true or false, should have been ascribed to Malthus. No writer on such subjects since the days of Aristotle but has proclaimed it, and frequently in the very same words.\*

It is impossible to look around us on the aggregate of animated beings without being convinced beyond doubt that nature has been more engrossed with the care of species than of individuals.

The precautions which nature has taken to ensure the perpetuity of races are remarkable ; and among these precautions, a very noticeable one is the profusion of germs or seeds. This superabundance appears to be calculated in an inverse ratio to the sensibility, intelligence, and power with which each species is endowed, to enable it to resist destruction.

Thus, in the vegetable kingdom, the means of reproduction, by seeds, cuttings, etc., which a single plant can furnish, are countless. One elm (were all its seeds to take root) might give birth in a single year to a million of trees. Why should this not actually happen ? Because all the seeds have not the benefit of the conditions which vegetable life exacts, namely, space and nourishment. They are destroyed ; and as plants are destitute of sensibility, nature has spared neither the means of reproduction, nor those of destruction.

\* Sir James Steuart of Coltness, whose *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy* was published in 1767, nine years before the appearance of Adam Smith's great work, takes the very same view of the principle of population which Malthus, thirty years afterwards, more formally enunciated. "The generative faculty," says Sir James Steuart, "resembles a spring loaded with a weight, which always exerts itself in proportion to the diminution of resistance. When food has remained some time without augmentation or diminution, generation will carry numbers as high as possible ; if, then, food come to be diminished, the spring is overpowered, the force of it becomes less than nothing, inhabitants will diminish, at least in proportion to the overcharge. If, on the other hand, food be increased, the spring will begin to exert itself in proportion as the resistance diminishes, people will begin to be better fed, they will multiply, and, in proportion as they increase in numbers, the food will become scarce again."—TRANSLATOR.



Animals, too, whose life is of a type akin to vegetable life, reproduce themselves in immense numbers. Who has not wondered that oysters, for instance, could multiply sufficiently to supply the enormous consumption of them?

As we advance in the scale of animal life, we find that the means of reproduction has been bestowed by nature with greater parsimony.

Vertebrated animals, especially the larger species, do not multiply so quickly as others. The cow goes nine months, produces only one calf, and must suckle it for some time. Yet even among cattle the reproductive power surpasses what might be thought absolutely necessary. In rich countries, such as England, France, and Switzerland, the number of animals of this description increases notwithstanding the enormous destruction of them; and had we boundless pastures and prairies, there can be no doubt that we might have both a still greater destruction and more rapid reproduction of them. I should say that if nourishment and space were not limited, we might have in a few years ten times more oxen and cows, even if we consumed ten times more meat. The reproductive power of cattle, then, even laying aside the extraneous consideration of the limitation of space and nourishment, is far from being fully developed.

It is certain that the reproductive faculty in the human species is less powerful than in any other, and it ought to be so. Man, in the superior situation in which nature has placed him, as regards intelligence and sympathy, ought not to be exposed to destruction in the same degree as the inferior animals. But we are not to suppose that *physically* he escapes from that law in virtue of which all species have the faculty of multiplying to a greater extent than space and nourishment permit.

I say *physically*, because I am speaking here only of the physiological law.

There is a wide difference between the *physiological power* of multiplying and *actual* multiplication.

The one is an absolute organic power when freed from all obstacle and all limitation *ab extra*—the other is the effective resulting force of this power combined with the aggregate of all the resistance which limits and restrains it. Thus the power of multiplication of the poppy may be a million a year, perhaps; but in a field of poppies the actual reproduction may be stationary or even decrease.

It is this physiological law that Malthus essayed to reduce to a formula. He inquired in what period of time a given number of men would double, *if their space and food were unlimited*.

We can see beforehand that as this hypothesis of the *complete satisfaction of all wants* is never realized in practice, the *theoretic* period must necessarily be shorter than any period of *actual* doubling which has ever been observed.

Observation, in fact, gives very different results for different countries. According to the results obtained by M. Moreau de Jonnés, taking for basis the actual increase of population, the period of doubling would require—in Turkey, 555 years; in Switzerland, 227; in France, 138; in Spain, 106; in Holland, 100; in Germany, 76; in Russia and in England, 43; and in the United States of America, 25 years, deducting the contingent furnished by immigration.

Now, what is the reason of such enormous differences? We have no reason to think that they are the result of physiological causes. Swiss women are as well formed and as prolific as American women.

We must conclude, then, that the absolute generative power is restrained by external obstacles. And what proves this beyond doubt is, that it is manifested as soon as circumstances occur to remove these obstacles. Thus an improved agriculture, new manufactures, some new source of local wealth, leads invariably in that locality to an increase of population. In the same way, when a scourge like the plague, or a famine, or war, destroys a great part of the population, we immediately find that multiplication is more rapidly developed.

When an increase of population, then, is retarded, or stops, we find that space and nourishment are wanting, or likely to be so; that it has encountered an obstacle, or is scared by one.

This phenomenon, the announcement of which has brought down so much abuse on Malthus, appears in truth beyond the reach of doubt.

If you put a thousand mice into a cage, with only as much provision as is necessary for their daily sustenance, their number, in spite of the acknowledged fecundity of the species, can never exceed a thousand, or if it do, there will be privation and there will be suffering,—both tending to reduce the number. In this case it would be correct to say that an external cause limits, not the power of fecundity, but the result of fecundity. There would assuredly

be an antagonism between the physiological tendency and the restraining force, and the result would be that the number would be stationary. To prove this, increase gradually the provision until you double it, and you will very soon find two thousand mice in the cage.

And what is the answer which is made to Malthus? He is met with the very *fact* upon which his theory is founded. The proof, it is said, that the power of reproduction in man is not indefinite, is that in certain countries the population is stationary. If the law of progression were true, if population doubled every twenty-five years, France, which had thirty millions of inhabitants in 1820, would now have more than sixty millions.

Is this logical?

I begin by proving that the population of France has increased only a fifth in twenty-five years, whilst in other countries it has doubled. I seek for the cause of this; and I find it in the deficiency of space and sustenance. I find that in the existing state of cultivation, population, and national manners and habits, there is a difficulty in creating with sufficient rapidity subsistence for generations that might be born, or for maintaining those that are actually born. I assert that the means of subsistence cannot be doubled—at least that they are not doubled—in France every twenty-five years. This is exactly the aggregate of those negative forces which restrain, as I think, the physiological power—and you bring forward this slowness of multiplication in order to prove that this physiological power has no existence. Such a mode of discussing the question is mere trifling.

Is the argument against the geometrical progression of Malthus more conclusive? Malthus has nowhere asserted that, *in point of fact*, population increases according to a geometrical progression. He alleges, on the contrary, that *the fact* is not so, and the subject of his inquiry has reference to the obstacles which hinder it. The progression is brought forward merely as a formula of the *organic* power of multiplication.

Seeking to discover in what time a given population can double itself, *on the assumption that all its wants are supplied*, he fixed this period at twenty-five years. He so fixed it, because direct observation had shown him that this state of things actually existed among a people, who, although very far from fulfilling all the conditions of his hypothesis, came nearer the conditions he had assumed than any other—namely, the people of America. This period once found,

and the question having always reference to the *virtual* power of propagation, he lays it down that population *has a tendency to increase* in a geometrical progression.

This is denied; but the denial is in the teeth of evidence. It may be said, indeed, that the period of doubling may not be everywhere twenty-five years; that it may be thirty, forty, or fifty years; that it varies in different countries and races. All this is fair subject of discussion; but granting this, it certainly cannot be said that, on the hypothesis assumed, the progression is not geometrical. If, in fact, a hundred couples produce two hundred in a given time, why may not two hundred produce four hundred in an equal time?

Because, say the opponents of the theory, multiplication will be restrained.

This is just what Malthus has said.

But by what means will multiplication be restrained?

Malthus points out two general obstacles to indefinite multiplication, which he has denominated the *preventive* and *repressive checks*.

As population can be kept down below the level of its physiological tendency only by a diminution of the number of births, or an increase of the number of deaths, the nomenclature of Malthus is undoubtedly correct.

Moreover, when the conditions, as regards space and nourishment, are such that population cannot go beyond a certain figure, it is evident that the destructive check has more power, in proportion as the preventive check has less. To allege that the number of births may increase without an increase in the number of deaths, while the means of subsistence are stationary, would be to fall into a manifest contradiction.

Nor is it less evident, *a priori*, and independently of other grave economic considerations, that in such a situation voluntary self-restraint is preferable to forced repression.

As far as we have yet gone, then, the theory of Malthus is in all respects incontestable.

He was wrong, perhaps, in adopting this period of twenty-five years as the limit of human fecundity, although it holds good in the United States. I am convinced that in assuming this period he wished to avoid the imputation of exaggeration, or of dealing in pure abstractions. "How can they pretend," he may have thought, "that I give too much latitude to *the possible* if I found my prin-

ciple on what *actually* takes place?" He did not consider that by mixing up in this way the *virtual* and the *real*, and representing as the measure of the *law of multiplication*, without reference to the *law of limitation*, a period which is the result of *facts governed by both laws*, he should expose himself to be misunderstood. This is what has actually happened. His geometrical and arithmetical progressions have been laughed at; he has been reproached for taking the United States as a type of the rest of the world; in a word, the confusion he has given rise to by mixing up these two distinct laws, has been seized upon to confute the one by the other.

When we seek to discover the abstract power of propagation, we must put aside for the moment all consideration of the physical and moral checks arising from deficiency of space, food, or comfortable circumstances. But the question once proposed in these terms, it is quite superfluous to attempt an exact solution. This power, in the human race, as in all organized existences, surpasses, in an enormous proportion, all the phenomena of rapid multiplication that we have observed in the past, or can ever observe in the future. Take wheat, for example: allowing five stalks for every seed, and five grains for every stalk, one grain has the virtual power of producing four hundred millions of grains in five years. Or take the canine race, and suppose four puppies to each litter, and six years of fecundity, we shall find that one couple may in twelve years produce eight millions of cubs.

As regards the human race, assuming sixteen as the age of puberty, and fecundity to cease at thirty, each couple might give birth to eight children. It is making a large deduction to reduce this number to one-half on account of premature deaths, since we are reasoning on the supposition of absolute comfort and all wants satisfied, which greatly limits the amount of mortality. However, let us state the premises in this way, and they give us in twenty-five years 2—4—8—16—32—64—128—256—512, etc.; in short, two millions in two centuries.

If we make the calculation on the basis adopted by Euler, the period of doubling will be twelve years and a half. Eight such periods will make exactly a century, and the increase in that space of time will be as 512 : 2.

At no era, and in no country, have we ever observed the numbers of the human race increase with this frightful rapidity. According to the book of Genesis, the Hebrews who entered

Egypt amounted to seventy couples;\* and we find from the book of Numbers that when Moses numbered the people, two centuries afterwards, they amounted to six hundred thousand men above twenty-one years of age,† which supposes a population of two millions at least. From this we may infer that the period of doubling was fourteen years. Statistical tables can scarcely be admitted to control Biblical facts. Shall we say that six hundred thousand men "able to go to war" supposes a population larger than two millions, and infer from that a period of doubling less than Euler has calculated? In that case, we should cast doubt either on the census of Moses or on the calculations of Euler. All that we contend for is, that it should not be pretended that the Hebrews multiplied with greater rapidity than it is possible to multiply.

After this example, which is probably that in which *actual* fecundity approximates most nearly to *virtual* fecundity, we have the case of the United States of America, where we know that the population doubles in less than twenty-five years.

It is unnecessary to pursue such researches farther. It is sufficient to know that in our species, as in all, the organic power of multiplication is superior to the actual multiplication. Moreover, it would involve a contradiction to assert that the actual surpasses the virtual.

Alongside of this absolute power, which it is unnecessary to determine more exactly, and which we may safely regard as uniform, there exists, as we have said, another force, which limits, compresses, suspends, to a certain extent, the action of the first, and opposes to it obstacles of different kinds, varying with times and places, with the occupations, the manners, the laws, or the religion of different nations.

I denominate this second force *the law of limitation*; and it is evident that the progress of population in each country, and in each class, is the result of the combined action of these two laws.

But in what does this law of limitation consist? We may say in a very general way, that the propagation of life is restrained or prevented by the difficulty of sustaining life. This idea, which we

\* "Threescore and ten *souls*."—*Gen.* xlv. 27. "Seventy *souls*."—*Exodus*, i. 5. "Threescore and ten *persons*."—*Deut.* x. 22.—TRANSLATOR.

† 601,730 "from twenty years old and upwards."—*Numbers*, xxvi. 2 and 51.—TRANSLATOR.

have already expressed in the terms of the formula of Malthus, it is of importance to develop farther, for it is the essential part of our subject.\*

Organized existences, which are indued with life, but without feeling, are entirely passive in this struggle between the two principles. As regards vegetables, it is strictly true that the number of each species is limited by the means of subsistence. The profusion of germs is infinite, but the resources of space and territorial fertility are not so. These germs injure, or destroy, one another; they fail to grow, or they take root and come to maturity only to the extent that the soil allows of. Animals are indued with feeling, but they would seem in general to be destitute of foresight. They breed, increase, and multiply without regard to the fate of their offspring. Death, premature death, alone limits their multiplication, and maintains the equilibrium between their numbers and their means of subsistence.

M. de Lamennais, in his inimitable language, thus addresses the people:—

“There is room enough in the world for all, and God has made it fertile enough to supply the wants of all.” And, further on, he says,—“The Author of the universe has not assigned a worse condition to man than to the inferior animals. Are not all invited to the rich banquet of nature? Is one alone excluded?” And, again, he adds,—“Plants extend their roots from one field to another, in a soil which nourishes them all, and all grow there in peace; none of them absorbs the sap of another.”

In all this we see only fallacious declamation, which serves as the basis of dangerous conclusions; and we cannot help regretting that an eloquence so admirable should be devoted to giving popular currency to the most fatal of errors.

It is not true that no plant robs another of its sap, and that all extend their roots in the soil without injury. Hundreds of millions of vegetable germs fall every year upon the ground, derive from it a beginning of vitality, and then die stifled by plants stronger, ranker, hardier than themselves. It is not true that all animals which are born are invited to the banquet of nature, and that none of them is excluded. Wild beasts devour one another; and, of domestic animals, man destroys a countless number. Nothing in fact is better calculated than this to show the existence and relations of these two principles—that of multiplication and that of

\* What follows was written in 1846.—EDITOR.

limitation. Why have we in this country so many oxen and sheep, notwithstanding the havoc we make? Why are there so few bears and wolves, although we slaughter far fewer of them, and they are so organized as to be capable of multiplying much faster? The reason is, that man prepares subsistence for the one class of animals, and takes it away from the other class. As regards each, he so arranges the law of limitation as to leave more or less latitude to the law of increase.

Thus, as regards both vegetables and animals, the limiting force appears only in one form, that of *destruction*. But man is indued with reason and foresight, and this new element modifies, and even changes, the mode of action of this force, so far as he is concerned.

Undoubtedly, in as far as he is a being provided with material organs, or, to speak plainly, in as far as he is an animal, the law of limitation, in the form of destruction, applies to him. It is impossible that the numbers of men can exceed their means of subsistence; for to assert that more men existed than had the means of existing, would imply a contradiction. If, then, his reason and foresight are lulled asleep, he becomes a vegetable, he becomes a brute. In that case, he will inevitably multiply in virtue of the great physiological law which governs all organized nature; and, in that case, it is equally inevitable that he should perish in virtue of that law of limitation the action of which he has ignored.

But if he exercises foresight, this second law comes within the sphere of his will. He modifies and directs it. It is in fact no longer the same law. It is no longer a blind, but an intelligent force; it is no longer a mere natural, it has become a social law. Man is the centre in which these two principles, matter and intelligence, meet, unite, and are blended; he belongs exclusively neither to the one nor to the other. As regards the human race, the *law of limitation* is manifested in both its aspects, and maintains population at the necessary level by the double action of foresight and destruction.

These two actions are not of uniform intensity. On the contrary, the one is enlarged in proportion as the other is restrained. The thing to be accomplished, the point to be reached, is limitation; and it is so more or less by means of *repression*, or by means of *prevention*, according as man is brutish or spiritual, according as he is more allied to matter or to mind, according as he has in him more of vegetative or of moral life. The law may be external to him, or internal, but it must exist somewhere.



We do not form a just idea of the vast domain of foresight, which the translator of Malthus has much circumscribed, by giving currency to that vague and inadequate expression, *moral restraint* [*contrainte morale*], which he has still farther limited by the definition he has given of it, namely, "The virtue which consists in not marrying, when one has not the means of *maintaining* a family, and yet living in chastity." The obstacles which intelligent human society opposes to possible multiplication take many other forms besides that of moral restraint thus defined. What means, for example, the pure and holy ignorance of early life, the only ignorance which it is criminal to dissipate, which every one respects, and over which the timid mother watches as over hidden treasure? What means the modesty which succeeds that ignorance, that mysterious defence of the young female, which intimidates whilst it enchants her lover, and prolongs, while it embellishes, the innocent season of courtship? The veil which is thus interposed at first between ignorance and truth, and then between truth and happiness, is a marvellous thing, and in aught save this would be absurd. What means that power of opinion which imposes such severe laws on the relations of the sexes, stigmatizes the slightest transgression of those laws, and visits it not only on the erring feebleness which succumbs, but, from generation to generation, on the unhappy offspring? What mean that sensitive honour, that rigid reserve, so generally admired even by those who have cast it off, those institutions, those restraints of etiquette, those precautions of all sorts—if they are not the action of that *law of limitation* manifested in an intelligent, moral, and *preventive* shape—in a shape, consequently, which is peculiar to man?

Let these barriers be once overturned—let mankind, in what regards the sexes, be no longer concerned either with etiquette or with fortune, or with the future, or with opinion, or with manners—let men lower themselves to the rank of vegetables or animals,—can we doubt that for the former, as for the latter, the power of multiplication would act with a force to necessitate the instant intervention of the *law of limitation*, manifested under such circumstances in a physical, brutal, and *repressive* shape; that is to say, by the action of indigence, disease, and death?

It is impossible to deny that, but for foresight and moral considerations, marriage would, in most cases, be contracted at an early age, or immediately after puberty. If we fix this age at sixteen, and if the registers of a given country show that marriages, on an average,

do not take place before four-and-twenty, we have then eight years deducted by *the law of limitation*, in its moral and preventive form, from the action of the law of multiplication ; and if we add to this figure the necessary allowance for those who never marry, we shall be convinced that the Creator has not degraded man to the level of the beasts that perish, but, on the contrary, has given him the power to transform the *repressive* into the *preventive* limitation.

It is singular enough that the spiritualist school and the materialist school should have, as it were, changed sides on this great question : the former fulminating against foresight, and endeavouring to set up the principle of animal nature ; the latter exalting the moral part of man, and enforcing the dominion of reason over passion and appetite.

The truth is, the subject is not rightly understood. Let a father consult the most orthodox clergyman he can find as to the management of his family, the counsels he will receive are just those which science has exalted into *principles*, and which, as such, the clergyman might probably repudiate. "Keep your daughter in strict seclusion," the old minister will say ; "conceal from her as much as you can the seductions of the world ; cultivate, as you would a precious flower, that holy ignorance, that heavenly modesty, which are at once her charm and her defence. Wait until an eligible match presents itself ; and labour in the meantime to secure her an adequate fortune. Consider that a poor and improvident marriage brings along with it much suffering and many dangers. Recall those old proverbs which embody the wisdom of nations, and which assure us that comfortable circumstances constitute the surest guarantee of union and domestic peace. Why be in a hurry ? Would you have your daughter at five-and-twenty burdened with a family which she cannot maintain and educate suitably to your rank in life ? Would you have her husband, feeling the inadequacy of his income to support his family, fall into affliction and despair, and finally, perhaps, betake himself to riot and debauchery ? The subject which now occupies you is the most important which can come under your consideration. Weigh it well and maturely ; and avoid precipitation," etc.

Suppose that the father, borrowing the language of M. de Lamennais, should reply : "In the beginning God addressed to all men the command to increase and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it. And yet you would persuade a young woman to live single, renounce family ties, and give up and aban-

don the chaste happiness of married life, and the holy joys of maternity ; and all this for no better reason than a sordid fear of poverty." Think you the old clergyman would have no reply to this ?

God, he might say, has not commanded man to increase and multiply without discretion and without prudence ; to act with as little regard to the future as the inferior animals. He has not inducted man with reason, in order that he may cease to use it in the most solemn and important circumstances. He has commanded man, no doubt, to increase, but in order to increase he must live, and in order to live he must have the means of living. In the command to increase, therefore, there is implied another command, namely, to prepare for his offspring the means of subsistence. Religion has not placed celibacy in the catalogue of crimes. So far from that, she has ranked it as a virtue, which she honours and sanctifies. We must not think that we violate the commandment of God when we are preparing to fulfil it with prudence, and with a view to the future good, happiness, and dignity of our family.

Now this reasoning, or reasoning of a similar kind, which we hear repeated every day, and which regulates the conduct of every moral and enlightened family, what is it but the application of a general doctrine to particular cases ? Or rather, what is that doctrine, but the generalization of reasoning which applies to every particular case ? The spiritualist who repudiates, on principle, the intervention of preventive limitation, is like the natural philosopher who should say to us, "Act in every case as if gravity existed, but don't admit gravitation in theory."

In our observations hitherto we have followed the theory of Malthus ; but there is one attribute of humanity to which it seems to me that most of our authors have not assigned that importance which it merits, and which plays an important part in the phenomena relative to population, resolves many of the problems to which this great question has given rise, and gives birth in the mind of the philanthropist to a confidence and serenity which false science had banished ; this attribute, which is comprised, indeed, in the notions of reason and foresight, is man's *perfectibility*. Man is perfectible ; he is susceptible of amelioration and of deterioration ; and if, in a strict sense, he can remain stationary, he can also mount and descend without limit the endless ladder of civilisation. This holds true not only of individuals, but of families, nations, and races.

It is from not having taken into account all the power of this progressive principle, that Malthus has landed us in those discouraging consequences which have rendered his theory generally repulsive.

For, regarding the *preventive check*, in a somewhat ascetic and not very attractive light, he could hardly attribute much force to it. Hence he concludes that it is the *repressive check* which generally operates; in other words, vice, poverty, war, crime, etc.

This, as I think, is an error; and we are about to see that the *limitative* force presents itself not only in the shape of an effort of chastity, an act of self-control, but also, and above all, as a condition of happiness, an instructive movement which prevents men from degrading themselves and their families.

Population, it has been said, tends to keep on a level with the means of subsistence. I should say that, for this expression *means of subsistence*, formerly in universal use, J. B. Say has substituted another which is much more correct, namely, *means of existence*. At first sight it would seem that subsistence alone enters into the question, but it is not so. *Man does not live by bread alone*, and a reference to facts shows us clearly that population is arrested, or retarded, when the aggregate of all the means of existence, including clothing, lodging, and other things which climate or even habit renders necessary, come to be wanting.

We should say, then, that population tends to keep on a level with the *means of existence*.

But do these means constitute something which is fixed, absolute, and uniform? Certainly not. In proportion as civilisation advances, the range of man's wants is enlarged, having regard even to simple *subsistence*. Regarded as a perfectible being, the *means of existence*, among which we comprehend the satisfaction of moral and intellectual, as well as physical wants, admit of as many degrees as there are degrees in civilisation itself, in other words, of infinite degrees. Undoubtedly, there is an inferior limit—to appease hunger, to shelter oneself from cold to some extent, is one condition of life, and this limit we may perceive among American savages or European paupers. But a superior limit I know not—in fact there is none. Natural wants satisfied, others spring up, which are factitious at first, if you will, but which habit renders natural in their turn, and, after these, others still, and so on without assignable limit.

At each step, then, which man takes on the road of civilisation,

his wants embrace a wider and more extended circle, and the *means of existence*, the point where the laws of *multiplication* and *limitation* meet, is removed, and elevated. For although man is susceptible of deterioration as well as of improvement, he aspires after the one and shuns the other. His efforts all tend to maintain the rank he has gained, and to rise still higher; and *habit*, which has been so well called a second nature, performs the part of the valves of our arterial system, by checking every retrograde tendency. It is very natural, then, that the intelligent and moral control which man exercises over his own multiplication should partake of the nature of these efforts to rise, and be combined and mixed up with his progressive tendencies.

The consequences which result from this organization are numerous. We shall confine ourselves to pointing out a few of them. First of all, we admit with the Economists that population and the means of existence come to an equilibrium; but the last of these terms being infinitely flexible, and varying with civilisation and habits, we cannot admit that in comparing nations and classes, population is proportionate to *production*, as J. B. Say\* affirms, or to *income*, as is represented by M. de Sismondi. And then every advancing step of culture implies greater foresight, and the moral and preventive check comes to neutralize the repressive one more and more as civilisation is realized in society at large, or in one or other of its sections. Hence it follows that each step of progress tends to a new step in the same direction, *vires acquirit eundo*; seeing that better circumstances and greater foresight engender one another in indefinite succession. For the same reason, when men, from whatever cause, follow a retrograde course, narrower circumstances and want of foresight become reciprocally cause and effect, and retrogression and decay would have no limit had society not been indued with that curative force, that *vis medicatrix*, which Providence has vouchsafed to all organized bodies. Observe, too, that at each step of this retrograde movement, the action of the law of limitation in its destructive form becomes at once more painful and more apparent. At first, it is only deterioration and sinking in the social scale; then it is poverty, famine, disorder, war, death;—painful but infallible teachers.

I should like to pause here to show how well this theory explains facts, and how well facts in their turn justify the theory. When,

\* It is fair to mention that J. B. Say represents the *means of existence* as a variable quantity.

in the case of a nation or a class, the means of existence have descended to that inferior limit at which they come to be confounded with the means of pure subsistence, as in China, in Ireland, and among the lowest and poorest class of every country, the smallest oscillations of population, or of the supply of food, are tantamount to death. In this respect, facts confirm the scientific induction. Famine has not for a long period visited Europe, and we attribute the absence of this scourge to a multitude of causes. The most general of these causes undoubtedly is, that the *means of existence*, by reason of social progress, have risen far above the *means of mere subsistence*. When years of scarcity come, we are thus enabled to give up many enjoyments before encroaching on the first necessities of life. Not so in such countries as China or Ireland, where men have nothing in the world but a little rice or a few potatoes. When the rice or potato crops fail, they have absolutely no means of purchasing other food.

A third consequence of human perfectibility we must notice here, because it tends to modify the doctrine of Malthus in its most afflicting phase. The formula which we have attributed to that economist is, that "Population tends to keep on a level with the means of subsistence." We should say that he has gone much farther, and that his true formula, that from which he has drawn his most distressing conclusions, is this: "Population tends *to go beyond* the means of subsistence." Had Malthus by this simply meant to say that in the human race the power of propagating life is superior to the power of sustaining life, there could have been no controversy. But this is not what he means. He affirms that, taking into account absolute fecundity on the one hand, and, on the other, limitation, as manifested in the two forms, repressive and preventive, the result is still the tendency of population to go beyond the means of subsistence.\* This holds true of every species of living creatures, except the human race. Man is an intelligent being, and can make an unlimited use of the preventive check. He is perfectible, seeks after improvement, and shuns deterioration. Progress is his normal state, and progress presupposes a more and more enlightened exercise of the preventive check; and then *the*

\* "There are few states in which there is not a constant effort in the population to increase beyond the means of subsistence. This constant effort as *constantly tends to* subject the lower classes of society to distress, *and to prevent any great permanent melioration of their condition*. . . . The constant effort towards population . . . increases the number of people *before* the means of subsistence are increased," etc. —MALTHUS on *Population*, vol. i. pp. 17, 18, 6th edition.

*means of existence increase more rapidly than population.* This effect not only flows from the principle of perfectibility, but is confirmed by *fact*, since on all sides the range of satisfactions is extended. Were it true, as Malthus asserts, that along with every addition to the means of subsistence there is a still greater addition to the population, the misery of our race would be fatally—inevitably—progressive; society would begin with civilisation and end with barbarism. The contrary is the fact; and we must conclude that the law of limitation has had sufficient force to restrain the multiplication of men, and keep it below the multiplication of products.

It may be seen from what has been said how vast and how difficult the question of population is. We may regret, no doubt, that a precise formula has not been given to it, and we regret still more that we find ourselves unable to propose one. But we may see how repugnant the narrow limits of a dogmatic axiom are to such a subject. It is a vain endeavour to try to express, in the form of an inflexible equation, the relations of data so essentially variable. Allow me to recapitulate these data.

(1.) *The law of increase or multiplication.*—The absolute, virtual, physiological power which resides in the human race to propagate life, apart from the consideration of the difficulty of sustaining life. This first datum, the only one susceptible of anything like precision, is the only one in which precision is superfluous; for what matters it where the superior limit of multiplication is placed in the hypothesis, if it can never be attained in the actual condition of man, which is to sustain life with the sweat of his brow?

(2.) There is a *limit*, then, to the law of multiplication. What is that limit? The means of existence, it is replied. But what are the means of existence? The aggregate of satisfactions or enjoyments, which cannot be exactly defined. They vary with times, places, races, ranks, manners, opinions, habits, and consequently the limit we are in search of is shifted or displaced.

(3.) Last of all, it may be asked, in what consists the force which restrains population within this limit, which is itself movable? As far as man is concerned, it is twofold: a force which *represses*, and a force which *prevents*. Now, the action of the first, incapable as it is in itself of being accurately measured, is, moreover, entirely subordinated to the action of the second, which depends on the degree of civilisation, on the power and prevalence of habits, on the tendency of political and religious institutions, on the organi-

zation of property, of labour, of family relations, etc. Between the law of multiplication and the law of limitation, then, it is impossible to establish an equation from which could be deduced the actual population. In algebra *a* and *b* represent determinate quantities which are numbered and measured, and of which we can fix the proportions; but *means of existence, moral government of the will, inevitable action of mortality*, these are the three data of the problem of population, data which are flexible in themselves, and which partake somewhat, moreover, of the astonishing flexibility of the subject to which they have reference—man—that being whom Montaigne describes as so fluctuating and so variable. It is not surprising, then, that in desiring to give to this equation a precision of which it is incapable, economists have rather divided men's minds than brought them into unison, and this because there is not one of the terms of their formulas which is not open to a multitude of objections, both in reasoning and in fact.

We shall now proceed to say something on the practical application of the doctrine of population, for application not only elucidates doctrine, but is the true fruit of the tree of science.

Labour, as we have said, is the only subject of exchange. In order to obtain utility (unless the utility which nature gives us gratuitously), we must be at the pains to produce it, or remunerate another who takes the pains for us. Man creates, and can create, nothing; he arranges, disposes, or transports things for a useful purpose; he cannot do this without exertion, and the result of this exertion becomes his property. If he gives away his property, he has right to recompense, in the shape of a service which is judged equivalent after free discussion. Such is the principle of value, of remuneration, of exchange—a principle which is not the less true because it is simple. Into what we denominate *products*, there enter divers degrees of *natural utility*, and divers degrees of *artificial utility*; the latter, which alone implies labour, is alone the subject of human bargains and transactions; and without questioning in the least the celebrated and suggestive formula of J. B. Say, that “products are exchanged for products,” I esteem it more rigorously scientific to say, that *labour is exchanged for labour*, or, better still, that *services are exchanged for services*.

It must not be inferred from this, however, that quantities of labour are exchanged for each other in the ratio of their duration or of their intensity; or that the man who transfers to another an



hour's labour, or even the man who labours with the greatest intensity, who, as it were, pushes the needle of the dynamometer up to 100 degrees, can always stipulate for an equal effort in return. *Duration* and *intensity* are, no doubt, two of the elements taken into account in the appreciation of labour; but they are not the only ones; for we must consider, besides, that labour may be more or less repugnant, dangerous, difficult, intelligent, that it may imply more or less foresight, and may even be more or less successful. When transactions are free, and property completely secured, each has entire control over his own labour, and, consequently, need only dispose of it at his own price. The limit to his compliance is the point at which it is more advantageous to reserve his labour than to exchange it; the limit to his exactions is the point at which the other party to the bargain finds it his interest not to make the exchange.

There are in society as many *strata*, if I may use the expression, as there are degrees in the scale of remuneration. The worst remunerated of all labour is that which approximates most nearly to brute force. This is an arrangement of Providence which is just, useful, and inevitable. The mere manual labourer soon reaches that *limit to his exactions* of which I have just spoken, for everybody can perform this kind of muscular automatic labour; and the *limit to his compliance* is also soon reached, for he is incapable of the intelligent labour which his own wants require. *Duration* and *intensity*, which are attributes of matter, are the sole elements of the remuneration of this species of unskilled material labour; and that is the reason why it is usually paid *by the day*. All industrial progress consists in this, namely, in replacing in each product a certain amount of *artificial*, and, consequently, *onerous utility*, by the same amount of *natural*, and, therefore, *gratuitous utility*. Hence it follows, that if there be one class of society more interested than another in free competition, it is the labouring class. What would be the fate of these men if natural agents, and new processes and instruments of production, were not brought continually, by means of competition, to confer *gratuitously*, on all, the results of their co-operation? The mere day-labourer knows not how to make available in the production of the commodities he has occasion for, heat, gravitation, or elasticity; nor can he discover the processes, nor does he possess the instruments, by which these forces are rendered useful. When such discoveries are new, the labour of inventors, who are men of

the highest intelligence, is well remunerated ; in other words, that labour is the equivalent of a large amount of rude unskilled labour ; or, again, to change the expression, his product is *dear*. But competition interposes, the product falls in price, the co-operation of natural agents is no longer profitable to the producer, but to the consumer, and the labour which has made them available approximates, as regards remuneration, to that labour which is estimated by mere duration. Thus, the common fund of gratuitous wealth goes on constantly increasing. Products of every kind tend, day after day, to become again invested,—and they are in reality invested,—with that condition of *gratuitousness* which characterizes our supply of air, and light, and water. The general level of humanity thus continues to rise, and to equalize itself ; and, apart from the operation of the law of population, the lowest class of society is that whose amelioration is virtually the most rapid. We have said, apart from the operation of the law of population ; and this brings us back to the subject we are now examining.

Figure to yourself a basin into which an orifice which is constantly enlarging admits a constantly increasing supply of water. If we look only to this circumstance we conclude that the level of the water in the basin is continually rising. But if the sides of the basin are flexible, and capable of contracting and expanding, it is evident that the height of the water will depend on the manner in which this new circumstance is combined with the other. The level of the water will sink, however great may be the supply running into the basin, if the capacity of the basin itself is enlarged still more rapidly. It will rise, if the circle of the reservoir is enlarged only proportionally and very slowly, higher still if it remain fixed, and highest of all if it is narrowed or contracted.

This is a picture of the social class whose destinies we are now considering, and which constitutes, it must be allowed, the great mass of mankind. The water which comes into the basin through the elastic orifice represents their remuneration, or the objects fitted to supply their wants and to sustain life. The flexibility of the sides of the basin represents the movement of population. It is certain\* that the means of existence overtake our population in a constantly increasing progression, but then it is equally certain that their numbers may increase in a still superior progression. The life of this class, then, will be more or less happy, more or less comfortable, according as the law of limitation, in its moral, intel-

\* See chap. xi. *ante*, pp. 4, 5, *et seq.*

ligent, and preventive form, shall circumscribe, to a greater or less extent, the absolute law of multiplication. There is a limit to the increase of the numbers of the working class. That limit is the point at which the progressive fund of remuneration becomes insufficient for their maintenance. But there is no limit to their possible amelioration, because of the two elements which constitute it, the one, wealth, is constantly increasing, and the other, population, is under their own control.

What we have just said with reference to the lowest social grade, the class of mere manual labourers, is applicable also to each of the superior grades, when classified in relation to one another, in an inverse proportion, so to speak, to the rudeness and materiality of their occupations. Taking each class simply by itself, all are subjected to the same general laws. In all there is a struggle between the physiological power of multiplication, and the moral power of limitation. The only respect in which one class differs from another is with reference to the point where these two forces meet, the height to which the limit between the two laws may be raised by remuneration or be fixed by the habits of the labourers—this limit we have denominated the *means of existence*.

But if we consider the various classes, no longer each by itself, but in their reciprocal relations, I think we can discern the influence of two principles acting in an inverse sense, and this without doubt is the explanation of the actual condition of mankind. We have shown how all the economic phenomena, and especially the law of competition, tend to an equality of conditions. Theoretically this appears to us incontestable. Seeing that no natural advantage, no ingenious process, none of the instruments by which such processes are made available, can remain permanently with producers, as such; and seeing that the results of such natural advantages or discoveries, by an irresistible law of Providence, tend to become the common, gratuitous, and, consequently, equal, patrimony of all men, it is evident that the poorest class is the one which derives the greatest *relative* profit from this admirable arrangement of the laws of the social economy. Just as the poor man is as liberally treated as the rich man with reference to the air he breathes, in the same way he becomes equal to the rich man, as regards all that portion of the value of commodities which progress is constantly annihilating. Essentially, then, the human race has a very marked tendency towards *equality*. I do not speak of a tendency of aspiration, but a tendency of realization. And yet equality is not

realized, or is realized so slowly, that in comparing two distant epochs we are scarcely sensible of the progress. Indeed we are so little sensible of it, that many able men deny it altogether, although in this they are certainly mistaken. Now, what is the cause which retards this fusion of classes on a common and progressive level?

In searching for the cause we need not, I think, look farther than the various degrees of *foresight* which each class exercises as regards the increase of population. The law of limitation, as has been already said, in as far as it is *moral* and *preventive*, we have under our own control. Man, as we have also said, is perfectible, and in proportion to his progress in improvement, he pays a more intelligent regard to this law. The superior classes, then, in proportion as they are more enlightened, are led to make greater exertions, and submit to greater sacrifices, in order to maintain their respective numbers on a level with the means of existence which their position in society demands.

Were we sufficiently far advanced in statistics, we should probably have this theoretical deduction converted into certainty, and have it proved by fact that marriages are less hasty and precocious among the higher than among the lower classes of society. If it be so, it is easy to see that in the general market, to which all classes bring their respective services, and in which labour of every kind is the subject of exchange, unskilled labour will be supplied in greater abundance than skilled labour; and this explains the continuance of that inequality of conditions, which so many, and such powerful, causes of another kind tend constantly to efface.

The theory which we have now briefly explained leads us to the practical conclusion that the best forms of philanthropy, the best social institutions, are those which, while acting in accordance with the Providential plan, as revealed to us by the social harmonies—I mean the plan of progressive equality—shall cause to descend among all ranks of society, and especially the lowest ranks, knowledge, discretion, morality, and foresight.

I say institutions, because, in fact, foresight results as much from the necessities of position as from resolutions purely intellectual. There are certain organizations of property, or, I should rather say, of industry, which are more favourable than others to what economists call a knowledge of the market, and, consequently, to *foresight*. It seems certain, for example, that *métayage* is much

more efficacious than *fermage*\* (the latter necessitating the employment of day-labourers) in interposing a preventive obstacle to the exuberance of population among the lower classes. A family of *métayers* is in a much more likely situation than a family of day-labourers to experience the inconveniences of hasty marriages and improvident multiplication.

I have also used the expression, "forms of philanthropy." In fact, almsgiving may effect a local and present good, but its influence must be limited even where it is not prejudicial to the happiness of the labouring classes; for it does not develop, but, on the contrary, may paralyze, that virtue which is most fitted to elevate the condition of the labourer, namely, *foresight*. To disseminate sound ideas, and, above all, to induce those habits which mark a certain degree of self-respect, is the greatest and most permanent good which we can confer upon the lower orders.

The *means of existence*, we cannot too often repeat, do not constitute a fixed quantity; they depend upon the state of manners, of opinion, and of habits. Whatever rank a man holds in the social scale, he has as much repugnance to descend from the position to which he has been accustomed as can be felt by men of an inferior grade. Perhaps there is even greater suffering in the mind of the aristocrat, the noble scions of whose house are lost among the *bourgeoisie*, than in that of the citizen whose sons become manual labourers, or in that of manual labourers whose children are reduced to pauperism. The *habit*, then, of enjoying a certain amount of material prosperity and a certain rank in life, is the strongest stimulant to the exercise of foresight; and if the working classes shall once raise themselves to the possession of a higher amount of enjoyment, and be unwilling again to descend in the social scale, then, in order to maintain themselves in that position, and preserve wages in keeping with their new habits, they must employ the infallible means of preventive limitation.

It is for this reason that I regard as one of the finest manifes-

\* "Although we might describe *fermage*, in a general way, as the letting or leasing of land, in whatever form it is done, we must distinguish two forms of letting, equally common in various parts of Europe, and very different in their effects. In the one form, the land is let for a fixed rent, payable in money annually. In the other, it is let under the condition of the produce being divided between the proprietor and the cultivator. It is to the first of these two modes of leasing land that we give more particularly the name of *fermage*. The other is generally designated in France as *métayage*."—*Dictionnaire de l'Économie Politique*, tome i. p. 759.

tations of philanthropy the resolution which appears to have been taken in England by many of the proprietors and manufacturers, to pull down cottages of mud and thatch, and substitute for them brick houses, neat, spacious, well lighted, well aired, and conveniently furnished. Were such a measure to become general, it would elevate the tone of the working classes. It would convert into real wants what are nowadays regarded as comparative luxuries; it would raise that limit which we have denominated the *means of existence*, and, by consequence, the *standard of remuneration*, from its present low rate. And why not? The lower orders in civilized countries are much above the lower orders among savages. They have raised themselves so far; and why should they not raise themselves still more?

We must not, however, deceive ourselves on this subject; progress can be but very slow, since to some extent it must be *general*. In certain parts of the world it might perhaps be realized rapidly if the people exercised no influence over each other; but this is not so. There is a great law of solidarity for the human race, in progress as well as in deterioration. If in England, for example, the condition of the working classes were sensibly improved, in consequence of a general rise of wages, French industry would have more chances of surpassing its rival, and by its advance would moderate the progressive movement manifested on the other side of the Channel. It would seem that, beyond certain limits, Providence has not designed that one people should rise above another. And thus, in the great aggregate of human society, as in its most minute details, we always find that admirable and inflexible forces tend to confer, in the long-run, on the masses, individual or collective advantages, and to bring back all temporary manifestations of superiority to a common level, which, like that of the ocean when the tide flows, is always equalizing itself and always advancing.

To conclude, perfectibility, which is the distinctive characteristic of man, being given, and the action of competition and the law of limitation being known, the fate of the human race, as regards its worldly destinies, may be thus summed up:—1st, Simultaneous elevation of all the social ranks, or of the general level of humanity; 2d, Indefinite approximation of conditions, and successive annihilation of the distances which separate classes, as far as consistent with absolute justice; 3d, Relative diminution of the numbers of the lowest and highest orders, and extension of

intermediate classes. It may be said that these laws must lead to absolute equality. No more than the constant approximation of asymptotical lines can finally lead to their junction. . . . .

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This chapter, the greater part of which was written in 1846, does not perhaps express with sufficient clearness the author's opposition to the ideas of Malthus.

Bastiat explains here very clearly the unperceived and naturally preventive action of individual motive,—the progressive desire for happiness, the ambition of men to better their condition; and the habit which causes each to regard the competence he has gained as a necessity,—*an inferior limit of the means of existence*, below which no one would willingly see his family reduced. But this is in some measure the negative view of the law. It only shows that in every society founded upon the institutions of property and family, population ceases to be a *danger*.

It remains to be shown that *population is in itself a force*, and to prove the necessary increase of productive power which results from the density of population. This, as the author has himself said (Part I., p. 87), is the important element neglected by Malthus, and which discloses harmony, where Malthus discovered discordance.

From the premises indicated in the chapter on *Exchange*, premises which he proposed to himself to develop in treating of population, the conclusion which Bastiat wished to draw was decidedly anti-Malthusian. We find it stated in one of the last notes which he wrote, and he recommends its being insisted on :—

“In the chapter on Exchange it has been demonstrated that, in a state of isolation, man's wants surpass his faculties, and that, in the social state, his faculties surpass his wants.

“This excess of faculties over wants proceeds from exchange, which is—association of efforts—separation of occupations.

“Thence an action and a reaction of causes and effects, in a circle of progress which is infinite.

“The superiority of faculties over wants, creating for each generation an excess of wealth, permits it to rear a more numerous offspring. A generation more numerous implies a better and more marked separation of occupations, and a new degree of superiority given to faculties over wants.

“This exhibits an admirable harmony.

“Thus, at a given epoch, the general aggregate of wants being represented by 100, and that of faculties by 110, the excess of 10 is thus divided,—5, for example, goes to the amelioration of men's condition, to the provoking of wants of a more elevated character, to the development of self-respect, etc.,—and 5 to the augmentation of their numbers.

"The wants of the second generation are 110,—namely, 5 more in quantity, and 5 more in quality.

"But for that very reason (for the double reason of the more complete physical, intellectual, and moral development, and of the greater density of population, which renders production more easy), the faculties have also increased in power. They will be represented, for example, by the figures 120 or 130.

"New excess, new division, etc.

"And let us not fear the *trop plein*. The elevation of wants, which is nothing else than the sentiment of dignity, is a natural limit. . . ."

EDITOR.



## XVII.

### PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SERVICES.

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*Services* are exchanged for *services*.

The *equivalence* of *services* results from voluntary exchange, and the free bargaining and discussion which precede it.

In other words, each *service* rendered to society is *worth* as much as any other service of which it constitutes the equivalent, provided *supply* and *demand* are in all respects perfectly *free*.

It is in vain to carp and refine upon it; it is impossible to conceive the idea of value without associating with it the idea of liberty.

When the equivalence of services is not impaired by violence, restriction, or fraud, we may pronounce that *justice* prevails.

I do not mean to say that the human race will then have reached the extreme limit of improvement, for liberty does not exclude the errors of individual appreciations—man is frequently the dupe of his judgments and passions; nor are his desires always arranged in the most rational order. We have seen that the value of a service may be appreciated without there being any reasonable proportion between its value and its utility; and this arises from our giving certain desires precedence over others. It is the progress of intelligence, of good sense, and of manners, which establishes this fair and just proportion by putting each service, if I may so express myself, in its right moral place. A frivolous object, a puerile show, an immoral pleasure, may have much value in one country, and may be despised or repudiated in another. The equivalence of services, then, is a different thing from a just appreciation of their utility. But still, as regards this, it is liberty and the sense of responsibility which correct and improve our tastes, our desires, our satisfactions, and our appreciations.

In all countries of the world, there exists one class of services, which, as regards the manner in which they are distributed and

remunerated, accomplishes an evolution quite different from that of private or free services. I allude to *public services*.

When a want assumes a character so universal and so uniform that one can describe it as a *public want*, it may be convenient for those people who form part of the same agglomeration (be it district, province, or country) to provide for the satisfaction of that want by collective action, or a collective delegation of power. In that case, they name functionaries whose duty it is to render to the community, and distribute among them, the service in question, and whose remuneration they provide for by a contribution which is, at least in principle, proportionate to the means of each member of the society.

In reality, the primordial elements of the social economy are not necessarily impaired or set aside by this peculiar form of exchange,—above all, when the consent of all parties is assumed. It still resolves itself into a transmission of efforts, a transmission of services. These functionaries labour to satisfy the wants of the taxpayers, and the taxpayers labour to satisfy the wants of the functionaries. The relative value of their reciprocal services is determined by a method which we shall have afterwards to examine; but the essential principles of the exchange, speaking in the abstract at least, remain intact.

Those authors, then, are wrong, who, influenced by their dislike of unjust and oppressive taxes, regard as *lost* all values devoted to the public service.\* This unqualified condemnation will not bear examination. In so far as *loss* or *gain* is concerned, the public service, scientifically considered, differs in nothing from *private service*. Whether I protect my field myself, or pay a man for protecting it, or pay the State for causing it to be protected, there is always a sacrifice with a corresponding benefit. In both ways, no doubt, I lose this amount of labour, but I gain security. It is not a loss, but an exchange.

Will it be said that I give a material object, and receive in return a thing without body or form? This is just to fall back

\* "The moment this value is handed over by the taxpayer, it is lost to him; the moment it is consumed by the Government, it is lost to everybody, and does not return to society."—J. B. SAY, *Traité d'Économie Politique*, liv. iii. chap. 9.

Unquestionably; but society gains in return the service which is rendered to it—security, for example. Moreover, Say returns to the correct doctrine almost immediately afterwards, when he says,—“To levy a tax is to do a wrong to society—a wrong which is compensated by no advantage, *when no service is rendered to society in exchange*.”—*Ibid.*

upon the erroneous theory of value. As long as we attribute value to matter, not to services, we must regard every public service as being without value, or lost. Afterwards, when we begin to shift about between what is true and what is false, on the subject of value, we shift about between what is true and what is false on the subject of taxation.

If taxation is not necessarily a loss, still less is it necessarily spoliation.\* No doubt, in modern societies, spoliation by means of taxation is perpetrated on a great scale. We shall afterwards see that it is one of the most active of those causes which disturb the equivalence of services and the harmony of interests. But the best way of combating and eradicating the abuses of taxation, is to steer clear of that exaggeration which would represent all taxation as being *essentially*, and *in itself*, spoliation.

Thus, considered in themselves, in their own nature, in their normal state, and apart from abuses, *public services*, like *private services*, resolve themselves into pure exchanges.

But the modes in which, in these two forms of exchange, services are compared, bargained for, and transmitted, the modes in which they are brought to an equilibrium or equivalence, and in which their relative value is manifested, are so different in themselves, and in their effects, that the reader will bear with me if I dwell at some length on this difficult subject, one of the most interesting which can be presented to the consideration of the economist and the statesman. It is here, in truth, that we have the connecting link between politics and social economy. It is here that we discover the origin and tendency of the most fatal error which has ever infected the science, the error of confounding society with Government; society being the grand *whole*, which includes both private and public services, and Government, the fraction which includes public services alone.

Unfortunately, when, by following the teaching of Rousseau, and his apt scholars the French republicans, we employ indifferently the words Government and Society, we pronounce implicitly, be-

\* "Public contributions, even when they are consented to by the nation, are a violation of property, seeing they can be levied only on values which have been produced by the land, capital, and industry of individuals. Thus, *whenever they exceed the amount indispensable for the preservation of society*, we must regard them as spoliation."—J. B. SAY, *Traité d'Économie Politique*, liv. iii. chap. 9.

Here, again, the subsequent qualification corrects the too absolute judgment previously pronounced. The doctrine that *services are exchanged for services*, simplifies much both the problem and its solution.

forehand, and without examination, that the State can and ought to absorb private exertion altogether, along with individual liberty and responsibility. We conclude that all private services ought to be converted into public services. We conclude that the social order is a conventional and contingent fact which owes its existence to the law. We pronounce the law-giver omnipotent, and mankind powerless, as having forfeited their rights.

In fact, we see public services, or governmental action, extended or restrained according to circumstances of time and place, from the Communism of Sparta, or the Missions of Paraguay, to the individualism of the United States, and the centralization of France.

The question which presents itself on the threshold of Politics, as a science, then, is this :—

What are the services which should remain in the domain of private activity? And what are the services which should fall within that of public or collective activity?

The problem, then, is this :—

In the great circle called *society*, to trace accurately the inscribed circle called *government*.

It is evident that this problem belongs to Political Economy, since it implies the comparative examination of two very different forms of exchange.

This problem once solved, there remains another, namely, what is the best organization of public services? This last belongs to pure Politics, and we shall not enter upon it.

Let us examine, then, first of all, the essential differences by which public and private services are characterized, which is a preliminary inquiry necessary to enable us to fix accurately the line which should divide them.

The whole of the preceding portion of this work has been devoted to exhibit the evolution of *private services*. We have had a glimpse of it in this formal or tacit proposition: *Do this for me, and I shall do that for you*; which implies, whether as regards what we give away or what we receive, a double and reciprocal consent. We can form no correct notion, then, of barter, exchange, appreciation, value, apart from the consideration of *liberty*, nor of liberty apart from *responsibility*. In having recourse to exchange, each party consults, on his own responsibility, his wants, his tastes, his desires, his faculties, his affections, his convenience, his entire situation; and we have nowhere denied that to the exercise of free

will is attached the possibility of error, the possibility of a foolish and irrational choice. The error belongs not to exchange, but to human imperfection; and the remedy can only reside in responsibility itself (that is to say, in liberty), seeing that liberty is the source of all experience. To establish restraint in the business of exchange, to destroy free will under the pretext that man may err, would be no improvement, unless it were first proved to us that the agent who organizes the restraint does not himself participate in the imperfection of our nature, and is subject neither to the passions nor to the errors of other men. On the contrary, is it not evident that this would be, not only to displace responsibility, but to annihilate it, at least as regards all that is valuable in its remunerative, retributive, experimental, corrective, and, consequently, progressive character? Again, we have seen that free exchanges, or services voluntarily rendered and received, are, under the action of competition, continually extending the co-operation of gratuitous forces, as compared with that of onerous forces, the domain of community as compared with the domain of property, and thus we have come to recognise in liberty that power which promotes progressive equality, or social harmony.

We have no need to describe the form which exchanges assume when thus left free. Restraint takes a thousand shapes; liberty has but one. I repeat once more, that the free and voluntary transmission of private services is defined by the simple words: "Give me this, and I will give you that; do this for me, and I shall do that for you"—*Do ut des; facio ut facias*.\*

The same thing does not hold with reference to the exchange of *public services*. Here *constraint* is to a certain extent inevitable, and we encounter an infinite number of different forms, from absolute despotism, down to the universal and direct intervention of all the citizens.

Although this ideal order of things has never been anywhere actually realized, and perhaps may never be so, except in a very elusory shape, we may nevertheless assume its existence. What is the object of our inquiry? We are seeking to discover the modifications which *services* undergo when they enter the public domain; and for the purposes of science we must discard the consideration of individual and local acts of violence, and regard the public service simply as such, and as existing under the most legitimate circumstances. In a word, we must investigate the trans-

\* Civil law terms. See Part I., p. 146.

formation which it undergoes from the single circumstance of its having become public, apart from the causes which have made it so, and of the abuses which may mingle with the means of execution.

The process is this :—

The citizens name mandatories. These mandatories meet, and decide, by a majority, that a certain class of wants—the want of education, for example—can no longer be supplied by free exertions and free exchanges made by the citizens themselves, and they decree that education shall be provided by functionaries specially delegated and intrusted with the work of instruction. So much for the service *rendered*. As regards the services *received*, as the State has secured the time and abilities of these new functionaries for the benefit of the citizens, it must also take from the citizens a part of their means for the benefit of the functionaries. This is effected by an assessment or general contribution.

In all civilized communities such contributions are paid in money. It is scarcely necessary to say that behind this money there is labour. In reality, it is a payment in kind. In reality, the citizens work for the functionaries, and the functionaries work for the citizens, just as, in free and private transactions, the citizens work for one another.

We set down this observation here, in order to elude a very widely spread sophism which springs from the consideration of money. We hear it frequently said that money received by public functionaries falls back like refreshing rain on the citizens. And we are led to infer that this rain is a second benefit added to that which results from the service. Reasoning in this way, people have come to justify the existence of functions the most parasitical. They do not consider that if this service had remained in the domain of private activity, the money (which, in place of going to the treasury, and from the treasury to the functionaries) would have gone directly to men who voluntarily undertook the duty, and in the same way would have fallen back like rain upon the masses. This sophism will not stand examination, when we extend our regards beyond the mere circulation of money, and see that at the bottom it is labour exchanged for labour, services for services. In public life, it may happen that functionaries receive services without rendering any in return ; and then there is a loss entailed on the taxpayer, however we may delude ourselves with reference to this circulation of specie.

Be this as it may, let us resume our analysis:—

We have here, then, an exchange under a new form. Exchange includes two terms—*to give*, and *to receive*. Let us inquire then how this transaction, which from being private has become public, is affected in the double point of view of services *rendered* and services *received*.

In the first place, it is proved beyond doubt that public services always, or nearly always, extinguish, in law or in fact, private services of the same nature. The State, when it undertakes a service, generally takes care to decree that no other body shall render it, more especially if one of its objects be to derive a revenue from it. Witness the cases of postage, tobacco, gunpowder, etc. Did the State not take this precaution, the result would be the same. What manufacturer would engage to render to the public a service which the State renders for nothing? We scarcely meet with any one who seeks a livelihood by teaching law or medicine privately, by the formation of high-roads, by rearing thorough-bred horses, by founding schools of arts and design, by clearing lands in Algeria, by establishing museums, etc. And the reason is this, that the public will not go to purchase what the State gives it for nothing. As M. de Cormenin has said, the trade of the shoemakers would soon be put an end to, even were it declared inviolable by the first article of the constitution, if Government took it into its head to furnish shoes to everybody gratuitously.

In truth, in the word *gratuitous*, as applied to public services, there lurks the grossest and most puerile of sophisms.

For my own part, I wonder at the extreme gullibility of the public in allowing itself to be taken in with this word. What! it is said, do you not wish gratuitous education? gratuitous studs?

Certainly I wish them, and I should also wish to have gratuitous food and gratuitous lodging—if it were possible.

But there is nothing really gratuitous but what costs nothing to any one. Now public services cost something to everybody; and it is just because everybody has paid for them beforehand that they no longer cost anything to the man who receives the benefit. The man who has paid his share of the general contribution will take good care not to pay for the service a second time by calling in the aid of private industry.

Public service is thus substituted for private service. It adds nothing either to the general labour of the nation or to its wealth. It accomplishes by means of functionaries, what would have been

effected by private industry. The question, then, is, Which of these arrangements entails the greatest amount of inconvenience? and the solution of that question is the object of the present chapter.

The moment the satisfaction of a want becomes the subject of a public service, it is withdrawn, to a great extent, from the domain of individual liberty and responsibility. The individual is no longer free to procure that satisfaction in his own way, to purchase what he chooses and when he chooses, consulting only his own situation and resources, his means, and his moral appreciations; nor can he any longer exercise his discretion in regard to the order in which he may judge it reasonable to provide for his various wants. Whether he will or not, his wants are now supplied by the public, and he obtains from society, not that measure of service which he judges useful, as he did in the case of private services, but the amount of service which the Government thinks it proper to furnish, whatever be its quantity and quality. Perhaps he is in want of bread to satisfy his hunger, and part of the bread of which he has such urgent need is withheld from him, in order to furnish him with education, or with theatrical entertainments, which he does not want. He ceases to exercise free control over the satisfaction of his own wants, and having no longer any feeling of responsibility, he no longer exerts his intelligence. Foresight has become as useless to him as experience. He is less his own master; he is deprived, to some extent, of free will, he is less progressive, he is less a man. Not only does he no longer judge for himself in a particular case; he has got out of the habit of judging for himself in any case. The moral torpor which thus gains upon him, gains, for the same reason, on all his fellow-citizens, and in this way we have seen whole nations abandon themselves to a fatal inaction.\*

\* The effects of such a transformation are strikingly exemplified in an instance given by M. d'Hautpoul, the Minister of War:—"Each soldier," he says, "receives 16 centimes a day for his maintenance. The Government takes these 16 centimes, and undertakes to support him. The consequence is that all have the same rations, and of the same kind, whether it suit them or not. One has too much bread, and throws it away. Another has not enough of butcher's meat, and so on. We have, therefore, made an experiment. We leave to the soldiers the free disposal of these 16 centimes, and we are happy to find that this has been attended with a great improvement in their condition. Each now consults his own tastes and likings, and studies the market prices of what they want to purchase. Generally they have, of their own accord, substituted a portion of butcher's meat for bread. In some instances they buy more bread, in others more meat, in others more vegetables, in others more fish. Their health is improved; they are better pleased; and the State is relieved from a great responsibility."

The reader will understand that it is not as bearing on military affairs that I cite



As long as a certain class of wants and of corresponding satisfactions remains in the domain of liberty, each, in so far as this class is concerned, lays down a rule for himself, which he can modify at pleasure. This would seem to be both natural and fair, seeing that no two men find themselves in exactly the same situation; nor is there any one man whose circumstances do not vary from day to day. In this way, all the human faculties remain in exercise, comparison, judgment, foresight. In this way, too, every good and judicious resolution brings its recompense and every error its chastisement; and experience, that rude substitute for foresight, so far at least fulfils its mission that society goes on improving.

But when the service becomes public, all individual rules of conduct and action disappear, and are mixed up and generalized in a written, coercive, and inflexible law, which is the same for all, which makes no allowance for particular situations, and strikes the noblest faculties of human nature with numbness and torpor.

If State intervention deprive us of all self-government with reference to the services we receive from the public, it deprives us in a still more marked degree of all control with reference to the services which we render in return. This counterpart, this supplementary element in the exchange, is likewise a deduction from our liberty, and is regulated by uniform inflexible rules, by a law passed beforehand, made operative by force, and of which we cannot get rid. In a word, as the services which the State renders us are imposed upon us, those which it demands in return are also imposed upon us, and in all languages take the name of *imposts*.

And here a multitude of theoretical difficulties and inconveniences present themselves; for practically the State surmounts all obstacles by means of an armed force, which is the necessary sequence of every law. But, to confine ourselves to the theory, the transformation of a private into a public service gives rise to these grave questions:—

Will the State under all circumstances demand from each citizen an amount of taxation *equivalent* to the services rendered? This were but fair; and this *equivalence* is exactly the result which we almost infallibly obtain from free and voluntary transactions,

this experiment. I refer to it as calculated to illustrate a radical difference between public and private service, between official regulations and liberty. Would it be better for the State to take from us our means of support, and undertake to feed us, or to leave us both our means of support and the care of feeding ourselves? The same question may be asked with reference to all our wants.

and the bargaining which precedes them. If the design of the State, then, is to realize this *equivalence* (which is only justice), it is not worth while taking this class of services out of the domain of private activity. But equivalence is never thought of, nor can it be. We do not stand higgling and chaffering with public functionaries. The law proceeds on general rules, and cannot make conditions applicable to each individual case. At the utmost, and when it is conceived in a spirit of justice, it aims at a sort of average equivalence, an approximate equivalence, between the two services exchanged. Two principles—namely, the proportionality and the progression of taxation—have appeared in many respects to carry this approximation to its utmost limit. But the slightest reflection will convince us that proportional taxation cannot, any more than progressive taxation, realize the exact equivalence of services exchanged. Public services, after having forcibly deprived the citizens of their liberty, as regards services both rendered and received, have, then, this farther fault of unsettling the value of these services.

Another, and not less grave, inconvenience is, that they destroy, or at least displace, responsibility. To man responsibility is all-important. It is his mover and teacher, his rewarder and avenger. Without it man is no longer a free agent, he is no longer perfectible, no longer a moral being, he learns nothing, he is nothing. He abandons himself to inaction, and becomes a mere unit of the herd.

If it be a misfortune that the sense of responsibility should be extinguished in the individual, it is no less a misfortune that it should be developed in the State in an exaggerated form. Man, however degraded, has always as much light left him as to see the quarter from whence good or evil comes to him; and when the State assumes the charge of all, it becomes responsible for all. Under the dominion of such artificial arrangements, a people which suffers can only lay the blame on its Government, and its only remedy, its only policy, is to overturn it. Hence an inevitable succession of revolutions. I say inevitable, for under such a *régime* the people must necessarily suffer; and the reason of it is that public services, besides disturbing and unsettling values, which is injustice, lead also to the destruction of wealth, which is ruin; ruin and injustice, suffering and discontent—four fatal causes of effervescence in society, which, combined with the displacement of responsibility, cannot fail to bring about political convulsions

like those from which we have been suffering for more than half a century.

Without desiring to indulge in digressions, I cannot help remarking, that when things are organized in this fashion, when Government has assumed gigantic proportions by the successive transformation of free and voluntary transactions into public services, it is to be feared that revolutions, which constitute in themselves so great an evil, have not even the advantage of being a remedy, unless the remedy is forced upon us by experience. The displacement of responsibility has perverted public opinion. The people, accustomed to expect everything from the State, never accuse Government of doing too much, but of not doing enough. They overturn it, and replace it by another, to which they do not say, "Do less," but "Do more;" so that, having fallen into one ditch, they set to work to dig another.

At length the moment comes when their eyes are opened, and it is felt to be necessary to curtail the prerogatives and responsibilities of Government. Here we are stopped by difficulties of another kind. Functionaries alleging *vested rights* rise up and coalesce, and we are averse to bear hard on numerous interests to which we have given an artificial existence. On the other hand, the people have forgotten how to act for themselves. At the moment they have succeeded in reconquering the liberty of which they were in quest, they are afraid of it, and repudiate it. Offer them a free and voluntary system of education:\* they believe that all science is about to be extinguished. Offer them religious liberty: they believe that atheism is about to invade us,—so often has it been dinned into their ears that all religion, all wisdom, all science, all learning, all morality, resides in the State or flows from it.

But we shall find a place for such reflections elsewhere, and must now return to the argument.

We set ourselves to discover the true part which competition plays in the development of wealth, and we found that it consisted in giving an advantage in the first instance to the producer; then turning this advantage to the profit of the community; and constantly enlarging the domain of the gratuitous, and consequently the domain of equality.

But when private services become public services, they escape competition, and this fine harmony is suspended. In fact, the

\* See the author's pamphlet, entitled *Baccalauréat et Socialisme*.—EDITOR.

functionary is divested of that stimulant which urges on to progress, and how can progress turn to the public advantage when it no longer exists? A public functionary does not act under the spur of self-interest, but under the influence of the law. The law says to him, "You will render to the public such or such a determinate service, and you will receive from it in return a determinate recompense." A little more or a little less zeal has no effect in changing these two fixed terms. On the contrary, private interest whispers in the ear of the free labourer, "The more you do for others, the more others will do for you." In this case, the recompense depends entirely on the efforts of the workman being more or less intense, and more or less skilful. No doubt *esprit de corps*, the desire for advancement, devotion to duty, may prove active stimulants with the functionary; but they never can supply the place of the irresistible incitement of personal interest. All experience confirms this reasoning. Everything which has fallen within the domain of Government routine has remained almost stationary. It is doubtful whether our system of education now is better than it was in the reign of Francis the First; and no one would think of comparing the activity of a government office with the activity of a manufactory.

In proportion, then, as private services enter into the class of public services, they become, at least to a certain extent, sterile and motionless, not to the injury of those who render these services (their salaries are fixed), but to the detriment of the public at large.

Along with these inconveniences, which are immense, not only in a moral and political, but in an economical point of view—inconveniences which, trusting to the sagacity of the reader, I have only sketched—there is sometimes an advantage in substituting collective for individual action. In some kinds of services, the chief merit is regularity and uniformity. It may happen that, under certain circumstances, such a substitution gives rise to economy, and saves, in relation to a given satisfaction, a certain amount of exertion to the community. The question to be resolved, then, is this: What services should remain in the domain of private exertion? What services should pertain to collective or public exertion? The inquiry, which we have just finished, into the essential differences which characterize these two kinds of services, will facilitate the solution of this important problem.

And, first of all, it may be asked, is there any principle to enable

us to distinguish what may legitimately enter the circle of collective action, and what should remain in the circle of private action ?

I begin by intimating that what I denominate here *public action* is that great organization which has for rule the *law*, and for means of execution, *force* ; in other words, *the Government*. Let it not be said that free and voluntary associations display likewise *collective exertion*. Let it not be supposed that I use the term private action as synonymous with *isolated action*. What I say is, that free and voluntary association belongs still to the domain of private action, for it is one of the forms of exchange, and the most powerful form of all. It does not impair the equivalence of services, it does not affect the appreciation of values, it does not displace responsibilities, it does not exclude free will, it does not destroy competition nor its effects ; in a word, it has not *constraint* for its principle.

But the action of Government is made general by *constraint*. It necessarily proceeds on the *compelle intrare*. It acts in form of *law*, and every one must submit to it, because a law implies a *sanction*. No one, I think, will dispute these premises ; which are supported by the best of all authorities, the testimony of universal fact. On all sides we have laws, and force to restrain the refractory.

Hence, no doubt, has come the saying that “ men, in uniting in society, have sacrificed part of their liberty in order to preserve the remainder,”—a saying in great vogue with those who, confounding *government* with *society*, conclude that the latter is artificial and conventional like the former.

It is evident that this saying does not hold true in the region of free and voluntary transactions. Let two men, determined by the prospect of greater profit and advantage, exchange their services, or unite their efforts, in place of continuing their isolated exertions—is there in this any sacrifice of liberty ? Is it to sacrifice liberty to make a better use of it ?

The most that can be said is this, that men sacrifice part of their liberty to preserve the remainder, not when they unite in society, but when they subject themselves to a Government, since the necessary mode of action of every Government is force.

Now, even with this modification, the pretended principle is erroneous, as long as Government confines itself to its legitimate functions.

But what are these functions ?

It is precisely this special character of having force for their

necessary auxiliary which marks out to us their extent and their limits. I affirm that as *Government acts only by the intervention of force, its action is legitimate only where the intervention of force is itself legitimate.*

Now, where force interposes legitimately, it is not to sacrifice liberty, but to make it more respected. So that this pretended axiom, which has been represented as the basis of political science, and which has been shown to be false as far as society is concerned, is equally false as regards Government. It is always gratifying to me to see these melancholy theoretical discordances disappear before a closer and more searching examination.

In what cases is the employment of force legitimate? In one case, and, I believe, in only one—the *case of legitimate defence*. If this be so, the foundation of Government is fully established, as well as its legitimate limits.\*

What is individual right?

The right which an individual possesses to enter freely and voluntarily into bargains and transactions with his fellow-citizens, which give rise, as far as they are concerned, to a reciprocal right. When is this right violated? When one of the parties encroaches on the liberty of the other. In that case, it is incorrect to say, as is frequently done, "There is an excess, an abuse of liberty." We should say, "There is a want, a destruction of liberty." An excess of liberty, no doubt, if we regard only the aggressor, but a destruction of liberty, if we regard the victim, or even if we regard the phenomenon as a whole, as we ought to do.

The right of the man whose liberty is attacked, or, which comes to the same thing, whose property, faculties, or labour is attacked, is to defend them *even by force*; and this is in fact what men do everywhere, and always, when they can.

Hence may be deduced the right of a number of men of any sort to take counsel together, and associate, in order to defend, *even by their joint force*, individual liberty and property.

But an individual has no right to employ force for any other purpose. I cannot legitimately *force* my neighbours to be industrious, sober, economical, generous, learned, devout; but I can legitimately force them to be just.

\* The author, in a previous work, had sought the solution of the same question. The subject of his inquiry was the legitimate province of law. All the developments in the pamphlet, entitled *La Loi*, are applicable to the subject he is now discussing. We refer the reader to that *brochure*.—EDITOR.

For the same reason the collective force cannot be legitimately applied to develop the love of industry, of sobriety, of economy, of generosity, of science, of religious belief ; but it may be legitimately applied to ensure the predominance of justice, and vindicate each man's right ?

For where can we seek for the origin of collective right but in individual right ?

The deplorable mania of our times is the desire to give an independent existence to pure abstractions, to imagine a city without citizens, a human nature without human beings, a whole without parts, an aggregate without the individuals who compose it. They might as well say, "Here is a man, suppose him without members, viscera, organs, body, soul, or any of the elements of which he is composed—still here is a man."

If a right does not exist in any of the individuals of what for brevity's sake we call a nation, how should it exist in the nation itself ? How, above all, should it exist in that fraction of a nation which exercises delegated rights of government ? How could individuals delegate rights which they do not themselves possess ?

We must, then, regard as a fundamental principle in politics, this incontestable truth, that between individuals the intervention of force is legitimate only in the case of legitimate defence ; and that a collective body of men cannot have recourse to force legally, but within the same limit.

Now, it is of the very essence of Government to act upon individuals by way of constraint. Then it can have no other rational functions than the legitimate defence of individual rights, it can have no delegated authority except to secure respect to the lives and property of all.

Observe that when a Government goes beyond these bounds, it enters on an illimited career, and cannot escape this consequence, not only that it goes beyond its mission, but annihilates it, which constitutes the most monstrous of contradictions.

In truth, when the State has caused to be respected this fixed and invariable line which separates the rights of the citizens, when it has maintained among them justice, what could it do more without itself breaking through that barrier, the guardianship of which has been intrusted to it—in other words, without destroying with its own hands, and by force, that very liberty and property which had been placed under its safeguard ? Beyond the administration and enforcement of justice, I defy you to imagine an intervention of Government

which is not an injustice. Allege, as long as you choose, acts inspired by the purest philanthropy, encouragements held out to virtue and to industry, premiums, favour, and direct protection, gifts said to be gratuitous, initiatives styled generous; behind all these fair appearances, or, if you will, these fair realities, I will show you other realities less gratifying; the rights of some persons violated for the benefit of others, liberties sacrificed, rights of property usurped, faculties limited, spoliations consummated. And can the people possibly behold a spectacle more melancholy, more painful, than that of the collective force employed in perpetrating crimes which it is its special duty to repress?

In principle, it is enough that the Government has at its disposal, as a necessary instrument, *force*, in order to enable us to discover what the private services are which can legitimately be converted into *public services*. They are those which have for their object the maintenance of liberty, property, and individual right, the prevention of crime—in a word, everything which involves the *public security*.

Governments have yet another mission.

There are in all countries a certain amount of common property, enjoyed by the citizens jointly—rivers, forests, roads. On the other hand, unfortunately, there are also debts. It is the duty of Government to administer this active and passive portion of the public domain.

In fine, from these two functions there flows another,—that of levying the contributions which are necessary for the *public service*.

Thus:

To watch over the public security.

To administer common property.

To levy taxes.

Such I believe to be the legitimate circle within which Government functions ought to be circumscribed, and to which they should be brought back if they have gone beyond it.

This opinion, I know, runs counter to received opinions. "What!" it will be said, "you wish to reduce Government to play the part of a judge and a police-officer! You would take away from it all initiative! You would restrain it from giving a lively impulse to learning, to arts, to commerce, to navigation, to agriculture, to moral and religious ideas; you would despoil it of its fairest attribute, that of opening to the people the road of progress!"

To people who talk in this way, I should like to put a few questions.



Where has God placed the motive spring of human conduct, and the aspiration after progress? Is it in all men? or is it exclusively in those among them who have received, or usurped, the delegated authority of a legislator, or the patent of a placeman? Does every one of us not carry in his organization, in his whole being, that boundless, restless principle of action called *desire*? When our first and most urgent wants are supplied, are there not formed within us concentric and expansive circles of desires of an order more and more elevated? Does the love of arts, of letters, of science, of moral and religious truth, does a thirst for the solution of those problems which concern our present and future existence, descend from collective bodies of men to individuals, from abstractions to realities, from mere words to living and sentient beings?

If you set out with this assumption—absurd upon the face of it—that moral energy resides in the State, and that the nation is passive, do you not place morals, doctrines, opinions, wealth, all which constitutes individual life, at the mercy of men in power?

Then, in order to enable it to discharge the formidable duty which you would intrust to it, has the State any resources of its own? Is it not obliged to take everything of which it disposes, down to the last penny, from the citizens themselves? If it be from individuals that it demands the means of execution, individuals have realized these means. It is a contradiction then to pretend that individuality is passive and inert. And why have individuals created these resources? To minister to their own satisfactions. What does the State do when it seizes on these resources? It does not bring satisfactions into existence, it *displaces* them. It deprives the man who earned them in order to endow a man who has no right to them. Charged to chastise injustice, it perpetrates it.

Will it be said that in displacing satisfactions it purifies them, and renders them more moral?—that the wealth which individuals had devoted to gross and sensual wants, the State has devoted to moral purposes? Who dare affirm that it is advantageous to invert violently, *by force*, by means of spoliation, the natural order according to which the wants and desires of men are developed?—that it is moral to take a morsel of bread from the hungry peasant, in order to bring within the reach of the inhabitants of our large towns the doubtful morality of theatrical entertainments?

And then it must be remembered, that you cannot displace wealth without displacing labour and population. Any arrange-

ment you can make must be artificial and precarious when it is thus substituted for a solid and regular order of things reposing on the immutable laws of nature.

There are people who believe that by circumscribing the province of Government you enfeeble it. Numerous functions, and numerous agents, they think, give the State the solidity of a broader basis. But this is pure illusion. If the State cannot overstep the limits of its proper and determinate functions without becoming an instrument of injustice, of ruin, and of spoliation—without unsettling the natural distribution of labour, of enjoyments, of capital, and of population—without creating commercial stoppages, industrial crises, and pauperism—without enlarging the proportion of crimes and offences—without recurring to more and more energetic means of repression—without exciting discontent and disaffection,—how is it possible to discover a guarantee for stability in these accumulated elements of disorder?

You complain of the revolutionary tendencies of men, but without sufficient reflection. When in a great country we see private services invaded, and converted into public services, the Government laying bold of one-third of the wealth produced by the citizens, the law converted into an engine of spoliation by the citizens themselves, thus impairing, under pretence of establishing, the equivalence of services—when we see population and labour displaced by legislation, a deeper and deeper gulf interposed between wealth and poverty, capital, which should give employment to an increasing population, prevented from accumulating, entire classes ground down by the hardest privations—when we see Governments taking to themselves credit for any prosperity which may be observable, proclaiming themselves the movers and originators of everything, and thus accepting responsibility for all the evils which afflict society,—we are only astonished that revolutions do not occur more frequently, and we admire the sacrifices which are made by the people to the cause of public order and tranquillity.

But if laws and the Governments which enact laws confined themselves within the limits I have indicated, how could revolutions occur? If each citizen were free, he would doubtless be less exposed to suffering, and if, at the same time, the feeling of responsibility were brought to bear on him from all sides, how should he ever take it into his head to attribute his sufferings to a law, to a Government which concerned itself no farther with him than to repress his acts of injustice and protect him from the

injustice of others? Do we ever find a village rising against the authority of the local magistrate?

The influence of liberty on the cause of order is sensibly felt in the United States. There, all, save the administration of justice and of public property, is left to the free and voluntary transactions of the citizens; and there, accordingly, we find fewer of the elements and chances of revolution than in any other country of the world. What semblance of interest could the citizens of such a country have in changing the established order of things by violence, when, on the one hand, this order of things clashes with no man's interests, and, on the other, may be legally and readily modified if necessary?

But I am wrong. There are two active causes of revolution at work in the United States—slavery and commercial restriction. It is notorious that these two questions are constantly placing in jeopardy the public peace and the federal union. Now, is it possible to conceive a more decisive argument in support of the thesis I am now maintaining? Have we not here an instance of the law acting in direct antagonism to what ought to be the design and aim of all laws? Is not this a case of law and public force sanctioning, strengthening, perpetuating, systematizing, and protecting oppression and spoliation, in place of fulfilling its legitimate mission of protecting liberty and property? As regards slavery, the law says, "I shall create a force, at the expense of the citizens, not to maintain each in his rights, but to annihilate altogether the rights of a portion of the inhabitants." As regards tariffs, the law says, "I shall create a force, at the expense of the citizens, not to ensure the freedom of their bargains and transactions, but to destroy that freedom, to impair the equivalence of services, to give to one citizen the liberty of two, and to deprive another of liberty altogether. My function is to commit injustice, which I nevertheless visit with the severest punishment when committed by the citizens themselves without my interposition."

It is not, then, because we have few laws and few functionaries, or, in other words, because we have few public services, that revolutions are to be feared; but, on the contrary, because we have many laws, many functionaries, and many public services. Public services, the law which regulates them, the force which establishes them, are, from their nature, never neutral. They may be enlarged without danger, on the contrary with advantage, when they are necessary to the vigorous enforcement of justice; but carried beyond this

point, they are so many instruments of legal oppression and spoliation, so many causes of disorder and revolutionary ferment.

Shall I venture to describe the poisonous immorality which is infused into all the veins of the body politic, when the law thus sets itself, upon principle, to indulge the plundering propensities of the citizens? Attend a meeting of the national representatives when the question happens to turn on bounties, encouragements, favours, or restrictions. See with what shameless rapacity all endeavour to secure a share of the spoil,—spoil which, as individuals, they would blush to touch. The very man who would regard himself as a highway robber, if, meeting me on the frontier and clapping a pistol to my head, he prevented me from concluding a bargain which was for my advantage, makes no scruple whatever in proposing and voting a law which substitutes the public force for his own, and subjects me to the very same restriction at my own expense. In this respect, what a melancholy spectacle France presents at this very moment! All classes are suffering, and in place of demanding the abolition for ever of all legal spoliation, each turns to the law, and says, “You who can do everything, you who have the public force at your disposal, you who can bring good out of evil, be pleased to rob and plunder all other classes, to put money in my pocket. Force them to come to my shop, or pay me bounties and premiums, give my family gratuitous education, lend me money without interest,” etc.

It is in this way that the law becomes a source of demoralization, and if anything ought to surprise us, it is that the propensity to individual plunder does not make more progress, when the moral sense of the nation is thus perverted by legislation itself.

The deplorable thing is, that spoliation when thus sanctioned by law, and opposed by no individual scruple, ends by becoming quite a learned theory with an attendant train of professors, journals, doctors, legislators, sophisms, and subtleties. Among the traditional quibbles which are brought forward in its support we may remark this one, namely, that, *cæteris paribus*, an enlargement of *demand* is of advantage to those by whom labour is supplied, seeing that the new relation between a more active demand and a supply which is stationary is what increases the *value* of the service. From these premises the conclusion follows that spoliation is of advantage to everybody: to the plundering class, which it enriches directly; to the plundered class, by its reflex influence. The plundering class having become richer finds itself in a situation to

enlarge the circle of its enjoyments, and this it cannot do without creating a larger *demand* for the *services* of the class which has been robbed. Now, as regards each service, an enlargement of demand is an increase of value. The classes, then, who are legally plundered are too happy to be robbed, since the profit arising from the theft thus redounds to them, and helps to find them employment.

As long as the law confined itself to robbing the many for the benefit of the few, this quibble appeared specious, and was never invoked but with success. "Let us hand over to the rich," it was said, "the taxes levied from the poor, and we shall thus augment the capital of the wealthy classes. The rich will indulge in luxury, and luxury will give employment to the poor." And all, poor included, regarded this recipe as infallible; and for having exposed its hollowness, I have been long regarded, and am still regarded, as an enemy of the working classes.

But since the revolution of February the poor have had a voice in the making of our laws. Have they required that the law should cease to sanction spoliation? Not at all. The sophism of the rebound, of the reflex influence, has got too firmly into their heads. What is it they have asked for? That the law should become impartial, and consent to rob all classes in their turn. They have asked for gratis education, gratis advances of capital, friendly societies founded by the State, progressive taxation, etc. And then the rich have set themselves to cry out, "How scandalous! All is over with us! New barbarians threaten society with an irruption!" To the pretensions of the poor they have opposed a desperate resistance, first with the bayonet, and then with the ballot-box. But for all this, have the rich given up spoliation? They have not even dreamt of that; and the argument of the rebound still serves as the pretext.

Were this system of spoliation carried on by them directly, and without the intervention of the law, the sophism would become transparent. Were you to take from the pocket of the workman a franc to pay your ticket to the theatre, would you have the face to say to him, "My good friend, this franc will circulate and give employment to you and others of your class"? Or if you did, would he not be justified in answering, "The franc will circulate just as well if you do not steal it from me. It will go to the baker instead of the scene-painter. It will procure me bread in place of procuring you amusement."

We may remark also that the sophism of the rebound may be

invoked by the poor in their turn. They may say in their turn to the rich, "Let the law assist us in robbing you. We shall consume more cloth, and that will benefit your manufactures; more meat, and that will benefit your land estates; more sugar, and that will benefit your shipping."

Unhappy, thrice unhappy, nation in which such questions are raised, in which no one thinks of making the law the rule of equity, but an instrument of plunder to fill his own pockets, and applies the whole power of his intellect to try to find excuses among the more remote and complicated effects of spoliation. In support of these reflections it may not be out of place to add here an extract from the debate which took place at a meeting of the *Conseil général des Manufactures, de l'Agriculture, et du Commerce*, on Saturday the 27th April 1850.\*

\* Here ends the M.S. We refer the reader to the author's pamphlet entitled *Spoliation et Loi*, in the second part of which he has exposed the sophisms which were given utterance to at this meeting of the *Conseil général*.

On the subjects of the six chapters intended to follow this, under the titles of Taxation, Machinery, Free Trade, Intermediaries, Raw Materials, and Luxury, we refer the reader, 1st, to the *Discours sur l'Impôt des Boissons*, inserted in the second edition of the pamphlet, *Incompatibilités Parlementaires*; 2dly, to the pamphlet entitled *Ce qu'on voit et Ce qu'on ne voit pas*; 3dly, to the *Sophismes Économiques*.

## XVIII.

### DISTURBING CAUSES.

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IN what state would human society have been, had the transactions of mankind never been in any shape infected with force or fraud, oppression or deceit ?

Would Justice and Liberty have given rise inevitably to Inequality and Monopoly ?

To find an answer to these questions it would seem to me to be necessary to study the nature of human transactions in their essence, in their origin, in their consequences, and in the consequences of these consequences, down to the final result ; and this apart from the consideration of contingent disturbances which might engender injustice ; for it will be readily granted that injustice is not of the essence of free and voluntary transactions.

That the entry of Injustice into the world was inevitable, and that society cannot get rid of it, may be argued plausibly, and I think even conclusively, if we take man as he exists, with his passions, his egotism, his ignorance, and his original improvidence. We must also, therefore, direct our attention to the origin and effects of Injustice.

But it is not the less true that economical science must set out by explaining the theory of human transactions, assuming them to be free and voluntary, just as physiology explains the nature and relations of our organs, apart from the consideration of the disturbing causes which modify these relations.

Services, as we have seen, are exchanged for services, and the great *desideratum* is the equivalence of the services thus exchanged.

The best chance, it would seem, of arriving at this equivalence, is that it should be produced under the influence of Liberty, and that every man should be allowed to judge for himself.

We know that men may be mistaken; but we know also that they have the power given them of rectifying their mistakes; and the longer, as it appears to us, that error is persisted in, the nearer we approximate to its rectification.

Everything which restrains liberty would seem to disturb the equivalence of services, and everything which disturbs the equivalence of services engenders inequality in an exaggerated degree, endowing some with unmerited opulence, entailing on others poverty equally unmerited, together with the destruction of national wealth, and an attendant train of evils, heartburnings, disturbances, convulsions, and revolutions.

We shall not go the length of saying that Liberty—or the equivalence of services—produces absolute equality; for we believe in nothing absolute in what concerns man. But we think that Liberty tends to make men approximate towards a common level, which is movable and always rising.

We think also that the inequality which may still remain under a free *régime* is either the result of accidental circumstances, or the chastisement of faults and vices, or the compensation of other advantages set opposite to those of wealth; and, consequently, that this inequality ought not to introduce among men any feeling of irritation.

In a word, we believe that *Liberty is Harmony*. . . . .

But in order to discover whether this harmony exists in reality, or only in our own imagination, whether it be in us a perception or only an aspiration, we must subject free transactions to the test of scientific inquiry; we must study facts, with their relations and consequences.

This is what we have endeavoured to do.

We have seen that although countless obstacles are interposed between the wants of man and his satisfactions, so that in a state of isolation he could not exist—yet by the union of forces, the separation of occupations, in a word, by exchange, his faculties are developed to such an extent as to enable him gradually to overcome the first obstacles, to encounter the second and overcome them also, and so on in a progression as much more rapid as exchange is rendered more easy by the increasing density of population.

We have seen that his intelligence places at his disposal means of action more and more numerous, energetic, and perfect, that in proportion as capital increases, his absolute share in the produce



increases, and his relative share diminishes, while both the absolute and relative share falling to the labourer goes on constantly increasing. This is the primary and most powerful cause of equality.

We have seen that that admirable instrument of production called land, that marvellous laboratory in which are prepared all things necessary for the food, clothing, and shelter of man, has been given him gratuitously by the Creator; that although the land is nominally appropriated, its productive action cannot be so, but remains gratuitous throughout the whole range of human transactions.

We have seen that Property has not only this negative effect of not encroaching on community; but that it works directly and constantly in enlarging its domain; and this is a second cause of equality, seeing that the more abundant the common fund becomes, the more is the inequality of property effaced.

We have seen that under the influence of liberty services tend to acquire their normal value, that is to say, a value proportionate to the labour. This is a third cause of equality.

For these reasons we conclude that there is a tendency to the establishment among men of a natural level, not by bringing them back to a retrograde position, or allowing them to remain stationary, but urging them on to a state which is constantly progressive.

In fine, we have seen that it is not the tendency of the laws of Value, of Interest, of Rent, of Population, or any other great natural law, to introduce dissonance into the beautiful order of society, as crude science has endeavoured to persuade us, but, on the contrary, that all these laws lead to harmony.

Having reached this point, I think I hear the reader cry out, "The Economists are optimists with a vengeance! It is in vain that suffering, poverty, inadequate wages, pauperism, the desertion of children, starvation, crime, rebellion, inequality, are before their eyes; they chant complacently the harmony of the social laws, and turn away from a hideous spectacle which mars their enjoyment of the theory in which they are wrapt up. They shun the region of realities, in order to take refuge, like the Utopian dreamers whom they blame, in a region of chimeras. More illogical than the Socialists or the Communists themselves—who confess the existence of suffering, feel it, describe it, abhor it, and only commit the error of prescribing ineffectual, impracticable, and empirical remedies—the Economists either deny the existence of

suffering, or are insensible to it, if, indeed, they do not engender it, calling out to diseased and distempered society, '*Laissez faire, laissez passer* ; all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds.'

In the name of science, I repel, I repudiate with all my might, such reproaches and such interpretations of our words. We see the existence of suffering as clearly as our opponents. Like them, we deplore it, like them we endeavour to discover its causes, like them we are ready to combat them. But we state the question differently. "Society," say they, "such as liberty of labour and commercial transactions (that is to say, the free play of natural laws) has made it, is detestable. Break, then, the wheels of this ill-going machine, liberty (which they take care to nickname competition, or oftener anarchical competition), and substitute for them, by force, new wheels of our invention." No sooner said than done. Millions of inventions are paraded ; and this we might naturally expect, for to imaginary space there are no limits.

As for us, after having studied the natural and providential laws of society, we affirm that these laws are harmonious. These laws admit the existence of evil, for they are brought into play by men,—by beings subject to error and to suffering. But in this mechanism evil has itself a function to perform, which is to circumscribe more and more its own limits and ultimately to check its own action, by preparing for man warnings, corrections, experience, knowledge ; all things which are comprehended and summed up in the word, Improvement.

We add that it is not true that liberty prevails among men, nor is it true that the providential laws exert all their action. If they do act, at least, it is to repair slowly and painfully the disturbing action of ignorance and error. Don't arraign us, then, for using the words *laissez faire, let alone* ; for we do not mean by that, let man alone when he is doing wrong. What we mean is this : Study the providential laws, admire them, and *allow them to operate*. Remove the obstacles which they encounter from abuses arising from force and fraud, and you will see accomplished in human society this double manifestation of progress—equalization in amelioration.

For, in short, of two things one : either the interests of men are, in their own nature, concordant, or they are in their nature discordant. When we talk of one's Interest, we talk of a thing towards which a man gravitates necessarily, unavoidably ; otherwise it would cease to be called interest. If men gravitated

towards something else, that other thing would be termed their interest. If men's interests, then, are concordant, all that is necessary in order to the realization of harmony and happiness is that these interests should be understood, since men naturally pursue their interest. This is all we contend for; and this is the reason why we say, *Eclairez et laissez faire*, Enlighten men, and let them alone. If men's interests are in their nature and essence discordant, then you are right, and there is no other way of producing harmony, but by forcing, thwarting, and running counter to these interests. A whimsical harmony, truly, which can result only from an external and despotic action directed against the interests of all! For you can easily understand that men will not tamely allow themselves to be thwarted; and in order to obtain their acquiescence in your inventions, you must either begin by being stronger than the whole human family, or else you must be able to succeed in deceiving them with reference to their true interests. In short, on the hypothesis that men's interests are naturally discordant, the best thing which could happen would be their being all deceived in this respect.

Force and imposture, these are your sole resources. I defy you to find another, unless you admit that men's interests are harmonious,—and if you grant that, you are with us, and will say, as we say, Allow the providential laws to act.

Now, this you will not do; and, therefore, I must repeat that your starting-point is the antagonism of interests. This is the reason why you will not allow these interests to come to a mutual arrangement and understanding freely and voluntarily; this is the reason why you advocate arbitrary measures, and repudiate liberty; and you are consistent.

But take care. The struggle which is approaching will not be exclusively between you and society. Such a struggle you lay your account with, the thwarting of men's interests being the very object you have in view. The battle will also rage among you, the inventors and organizers of artificial societies, yourselves; for there are thousands of you, and there will soon be tens of thousands, all entertaining and advocating different views. What will you do? I see very clearly what you will do,—you will endeavour to get possession of the Government. That is the only force capable of overcoming all resistance. Will some one among you succeed? While he is engaged in thwarting and opposing the Government, he will find himself set upon by all

the other inventors, equally desirous to seize upon the Government; and their chances of success will be so much the greater, seeing that they will be aided by that public disaffection which has been stirred up by the previous opposition to their interests. Here, then, we are launched into a stormy sea of eternal revolutions, and with no other object than the solution of this question. How, and by whom, can the interests of mankind be most effectually thwarted?

Let me not be accused of exaggeration. All this is forced upon us if men's interests are naturally discordant, for on this hypothesis you never can get out of the dilemma, that either these interests will be left to themselves, and then disorder will follow, or some one must be strong enough to run counter to them, and in that case we shall still have disorder.

It is true that there is a third course, as I have already indicated. It consists in deceiving men with reference to their true interests; and this course being above the power of a mere mortal, the shortest way is for the *organisateur* to erect himself into an oracle. This is a part which these Utopian dreamers, when they dare, never fail to play, until they become Ministers of State. They fill their writings with mystical cant; and it is with these paper kites that they find out how the wind sits, and make their first experiments on public credulity. But, unfortunately for them, success in such experiments is not very easily achieved in the nineteenth century.

We confess, then, frankly that, in order to get rid of these inextricable difficulties, it is much to be desired that, having studied human interests, we should find them harmonious. The duty of writers and that of governments become in that case rational and easy.

As mankind frequently mistake their true interests, our duty as writers ought to be to explain these interests, to describe them, to make them understood, for we may be quite certain that if men once see their interest, they will follow it. As a man who is mistaken with reference to his own interests injures those of the public (this results from their harmony), the duty of Government will be to bring back the small body of dissentients and violators of the providential laws into the path of justice, which is identical with that of utility. In other words, the single mission of Government will be to establish the dominion of justice; and it will no longer have to embarrass itself with the painful endeavour to produce, at great cost, and by encroaching on individual liberty, a

Harmony which is self-created, and which Government action never fails to destroy.

After what has been said, we shall not be regarded as such fanatical advocates of social harmony as to deny that it may be, and frequently is, disturbed. I will even add that, in my opinion, the disturbances of the social order, which are caused by blind passions, ignorance, and error, are infinitely greater and more prolonged than are generally supposed; and it is these disturbing causes which we are about to make the subject of our inquiry.

Man comes into the world having implanted in him ineradicably the desire of happiness and aversion from pain. Seeing that he acts in obedience to this impulse, we cannot deny that personal interest is the moving spring of the individual, of all individuals, and, consequently, of society. And seeing that personal interest, in the economic sphere, is the motive of human actions and the mainspring of society, Evil must proceed from it as well as Good; and it is in this motive power that we must seek to discover harmony and the causes by which that harmony is disturbed.

The constant aspiration of self-interest is to silence want, or, to speak more generally, desire, by satisfaction.

Between these two terms, which are essentially personal and intransmissible, want and satisfaction, there is interposed a mean term which is transmissible and exchangeable,—effort.

Over all this mechanism we have placed the faculty of comparing, of judging—mind, intelligence. But human intelligence is fallible. We may be mistaken. That is beyond dispute; for were any one to assert that man cannot err, we should at once conclude that it was unnecessary to hold any farther argument with him.

We may be mistaken in many ways. We may, for instance, form a wrong appreciation of the relative importance of our wants. In this case, were we living in a state of isolation, we should give to our efforts a direction not in accordance with our true interests. In a state of society, and under the operation of the law of exchange, the effect would be the same; for then we should direct demand and remuneration to services of a kind either frivolous or hurtful, and so give a wrong direction to labour.

We may also err, from being ignorant that a satisfaction which we ardently seek for can only remove a suffering by becoming the source of still greater sufferings. There is scarcely any effect which

may not in its turn become a cause. Foresight has been given us to enable us to observe the concatenation of effects, so that we may not sacrifice the future to the present; but we are frequently deficient in foresight.

Here, then, is the first source of evil, error arising from the feebleness of our judgment or the force of our passions; and it belongs principally to the domain of morals. In this case, as the error and the passion are individual, the resulting evil must, to a certain extent, be individual also; and reflection, experience, and the feeling of responsibility are its proper correctives.

Errors of this class, however, may assume a social character, and, when erected into a system, may give rise to widespread suffering. There are countries, for example, in which the governing power is strongly convinced that the prosperity of nations is measured, not by the amount of wants which are satisfied, but by the amount of efforts, whatever may be their results. The division of labour assists powerfully this illusion. When we observe that each profession sets itself to overcome a certain species of obstacle, we imagine that the existence of that obstacle is the source of wealth. In such countries, when vanity, frivolity, or a false love of glory are predominant passions, and provoke corresponding desires, and determine a portion of the national industry in that direction, Governments believe that all will be over with them if their subjects come to be reformed and rendered more moral. What will become now, they say, of milliners, cooks, grooms, embroiderers, dancers, lace-manufacturers, etc.? They do not reflect that the human heart is always large enough to contain enough of honest, reasonable, and legitimate desires to afford employment and support to labour; that the business is not to suppress desires, but to rectify and purify them; and that labour, consequently, following the same evolution, may have its direction changed and still be carried on to the same extent as before. In countries where these melancholy doctrines prevail, we hear it frequently said, "It is unfortunate that morals and industry cannot march side by side. We should desire, indeed, that the citizens should be moral, but we cannot allow them to become idle and poor. This is the reason why we must continue to make laws which are favourable to luxury. If necessary, we impose taxes on the people; and for the sake of the people, and to ensure them employment, we charge Kings, Presidents, Ambassadors, Ministers, with the duty of *representing* them." All this is said and done

in the best possible faith; and the people themselves acquiesce in it with a good grace. It is very clear that when luxury and frivolity thus become a legislative affair, regulated, decreed, imposed, systematized, by public force, the law of Responsibility loses all its moral power.\* . . . .

\* The author was unable to continue this examination of errors—which are for those who are misled by them a nearly immediate cause of suffering—nor to describe another class of errors, which make their appearance in the shape of violence and fraud, and the first effects of which bear heavily on others. His notes contain nothing on the subject of *disturbing causes* but the preceding fragment and that which follows. We would also refer the reader to the first chapter of the second series of *Sophisms*, entitled *Spoliation*.—EDITOR.

## XIX.

W A R.

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OF all the circumstances which contribute to impart to nations their distinctive character and aspect, and to form and modify their genius, their moral condition, their customs, and their laws, the one which exerts a far more powerful influence than all the rest, because it includes all the rest, is the manner in which they provide for their subsistence. For this observation we are indebted to Charles Comte, and we have reason to be surprised that it has not had a more prominent place given to it in the moral and political sciences.

This circumstance, in fact, acts upon the human race in two ways, and with equal power in both,—by its continuity, and by its universality. To subsist, to better one's condition, to bring up a family, are not affairs of time, or place, or taste, or opinion, or choice; they are the daily, constant, and unavoidable concern of all men, at all times, and in all countries.

Everywhere, the greater part of their moral, intellectual, and physical force is devoted directly or indirectly to create and replace the means of subsistence. The hunter, the fisher, the shepherd, the agriculturist, the manufacturer, the merchant, the labourer, the artisan, the capitalist,—all think first of all how they are to live (prosaic as the avowal may seem), and then how to live better and better, if they can. The proof of it is that it is only for this end that they are hunters, fishers, manufacturers, agriculturists, etc. In the same way, the public functionary, the soldier, the magistrate, enter upon their careers in order to ensure the supply of their wants. We do not necessarily charge a man with want of devotion or disinterestedness when we quote the proverb, *The priest lives by the altar*, for before he belonged to the priesthood he belonged to humanity; and if at this moment he sits down to write a book against this vulgar view of human nature, the sale of his book will demolish his argument.



God forbid that I should seek to deny the existence of self-denial and disinterestedness. But it must be granted that they are exceptional, and it is because they are so that they merit and call forth our admiration. If we consider human nature in its entirety, without having made a previous covenant with the demon of sentimentalism, we must allow that disinterested efforts bear no comparison, as respects their number, with those which are called forth by the hard necessities of our condition. And it is because those efforts, which constitute the aggregate of our employments, engross so large a portion of each man's life, that they cannot fail to exert a powerful influence on national character.

M. Saint-Marc Girardin says somewhere or other that he has been led to acknowledge the relative insignificance of political forms in comparison with those great general laws which their employments and their wants impose upon nations. "Do you desire to know the condition of a people?" says he, "ask not how they are governed, but how they are employed."

As a general view, this is just; but the author hastens to falsify it by converting it into a system. The importance of political forms has been exaggerated; and what does he do? He denies their importance altogether, or acknowledges it only to laugh at it. Forms of government, he says, do not interest us but on the day of an election, or when we are reading the newspapers. Monarchy or Republic, Aristocracy or Democracy, what matters it? And what conclusion does he arrive at? In maintaining that *infant* nations resemble each other, whatever their political constitution happens to be, he assimilates the United States to ancient Egypt, because in both countries gigantic works have been executed. Americans clear lands, dig canals, construct railways, and they do all this for themselves, because they are a democracy, and their own masters. The Egyptians raised temples, pyramids, obelisks, and palaces for their kings and their priests, because they were slaves. And yet we are told that the difference is a mere affair of form, not worth regarding, or which we should regard merely to laugh at. Alas! how the contagion of classical lore corrupts and misleads its superstitious votaries!

M. Saint-Marc Girardin, still proceeding on his general proposition that the prevailing occupations of a nation determine its genius, soon after remarks that formerly we were occupied with war and religion, but nowadays with commerce and manufactures. This is the reason why former generations bore a warlike and religious impress.

Rousseau had long before remarked that the care for subsistence was the prevailing occupation only of some nations, and those the most prosaic; and that other nations, more worthy of the name, had devoted themselves to nobler exertions.

Now, in this have not both M. Saint-Marc Girardin and Rousseau been the dupes of an historical illusion? Have they not mistaken the amusements, the diversions, or the pretexts and instruments of despotism, which give employment to some of the people for the occupations of all? And has the illusion not arisen from this, that historians are always telling us about the class which does not work, never about the class which does; and in this way we come to regard the first of these classes as the entire nation.

I cannot help thinking that among the Greeks, among the Romans, among the people of the Middle Ages, men just did what they do now, and were subject to wants so pressing and so constantly recurring, that they were obliged to provide for them under pain of death. Hence I cannot help concluding that such employments then, as at present, formed the principal and absorbing occupation of the great bulk of the human race.

This much is certain, that very few people succeeded in living without work, on the labour of the subject masses. The small number of idlers who did so caused their slaves to construct for them sumptuous palaces, magnificent castles, and sombre fortresses. They loved to surround themselves with all the sensual enjoyments of life, and with all the monuments of art. They amused themselves by descanting on philosophy and cosmogony; and, above all, they cultivated assiduously the two sciences to which they owed their supremacy and their enjoyments,—the science of force, and the science of fraud.

Although below this aristocracy there existed countless multitudes engaged in creating for themselves the means of sustaining life, and for their oppressors the means of revelling in pleasures, yet as historians have never made the slightest allusion to those multitudes, we have come to forget their existence, and never taken them into account. Our regards are exclusively fixed on the aristocracy. To it we give the name of *Old or Feudal Families*; and we imagine that the men of those times maintained themselves without having recourse to commerce, to manufactures, to labour, to vulgar occupations. We admire their disinterestedness, their generosity, their taste for the arts, their spirituality, their disdain of servile employments, their elevation of mind and sentiment;

and, in high-sounding language, we assert that at one epoch nations cared only for military glory, at another for the arts, at another for philosophy, at another for religion, at another for virtue. We sincerely lament our own condition, and give utterance to all sorts of sarcastic observations, to the effect that, in spite of these sublime models, we are unable to attain the same elevation, but are reduced to assign to labour and its vulgar merits a prominent place in the system of modern life.

Let us console ourselves with the reflection, that it occupied a no less important place among the ancients. Only, the drudgery of labour, from which a limited number of people had succeeded in freeing themselves, fell with redoubled weight upon the enslaved masses, to the great detriment of justice, of liberty, of property, of wealth, of equality, and of progress. This is the first of those disturbing causes to which I propose to solicit the attention of the reader.

The means, then, to which men have recourse in order to obtain the means of subsistence cannot fail to exert a powerful influence on their condition, physical, moral, intellectual, economical, and political. Who can doubt that if we were in a situation to observe different tribes of men, one of which had devoted itself exclusively to the chase, another to fishing, a third to agriculture, a fourth to navigation, we should discover very considerable differences in their ideas, in their opinions, in their habits, their manners, their customs, their laws, and their religion? No doubt we should find human nature everywhere essentially the same; these various laws, customs, and religions would have many points in common; and such points we designate as the general laws of human society.

Be this as it may, there can be no doubt that in our great modern societies, we find at work all, or nearly all, the various means of providing subsistence,—fisheries, agriculture, manufactures, commerce, arts, and sciences, although in different proportions in different countries. This is the reason why we do not discover among nations so situated such marked and striking differences as would be apparent if each devoted itself to one of these occupations exclusively.

But if the nature of the occupations in which a people is engaged exercises a powerful influence on its morality, its desires, and its tastes,—its morality in its turn exercises a great influence upon its occupations, at least upon the proportion which obtains between

these occupations. But I shall not dwell on this observation, which I have presented in another part of this work,\* but hasten to the principal subject of the present chapter.

A man (and the same thing may be said of a people) may procure the means of existence in two ways,—by creating them, or by stealing them.

Each of these two great sources of acquisition presents a variety of methods.

We may *create* the means of existence by the chase, by fishing, by agriculture, etc.

We may *steal* them by breach of trust, by violence, by force, fraud, war, etc.

If, confining ourselves to the circle of one or other of these two categories, we find that the predominance of one of these methods establishes so marked a difference in the character of nations, how much greater must the difference be between a nation which lives by production, and a nation which lives by spoliation?

For it is not one of our faculties only, but all of them, which the necessity of providing for our subsistence brings into exercise; and what can be more fitted to modify the social condition of nations than what thus modifies all the human faculties?

This consideration, important as it is, has been so little regarded, that I must dwell upon it for an instant.

The realization of an enjoyment or satisfaction presupposes labour; whence it follows that spoliation, far from excluding production, presupposes it and takes it for granted.

This consideration, it seems to me, ought to modify the partiality which historians, poets, and novel-writers have displayed for those heroic epochs which were not distinguished by what they sneer at under the epithet of *industrialism*. In these days, as in our own, men lived, subsisted; and labour must have done its office then as now. Only there was this difference, that nations, classes, and individuals succeeded in laying their share of the labour and toil on the shoulders of other nations, other classes, and other individuals.

The characteristic of production is to bring out of nothing, if I may so speak, the satisfactions and enjoyments which sustain and embellish life; so that a man, or a nation, may multiply *ad infinitum* these enjoyments without inflicting privation on any other man, or any other nation. So much is this the case, that a pro-

\* See concluding part of chapter xi. *ante*.

found study of the economic mechanism shows us that the success of one man's labour opens up a field for the success of another's exertions.

The characteristic of spoliation, on the contrary, is this, that it cannot confer a satisfaction on one without inflicting a corresponding privation on another; for spoliation creates nothing, but displaces what labour has created. It entails an absolute loss of the exertions of both parties. So far, then, from adding to the enjoyments of mankind, it diminishes these enjoyments, and confers them, moreover, on those who have not merited them.

In order to produce, man must direct all his powers and faculties to obtain the mastery over natural laws; for it is by this means that he accomplishes his object. Hence, iron converted into a ploughshare is the emblem of production.

To steal, on the other hand, man must direct all his powers and faculties to obtain the mastery over his fellow-man; for it is by this means that he attains his end. Hence, iron converted into a sword is the emblem of spoliation.

Between the ploughshare, which brings plenty, and the sword, which brings destruction and death, there is no greater difference than between a nation of industrious workmen and a nation of spoliators. They have, and can have, nothing whatever in common. They have neither the same ideas, nor the same rules of appreciation, nor the same tastes, manners, character, laws, morals, or religion.

No more melancholy spectacle can present itself to the eye of philanthropy than to see an industrial age putting forth all its efforts, in the way of education, to get inoculated with the ideas, the sentiments, the errors, the prejudices, the vices, of an era of spoliation. Our own era is frequently accused of wanting consistency, of displaying little accordance between the judgments that are formed and the conduct that is pursued; and I believe that this arises principally from the cause which I have just pointed out.

Spoliation, in the shape of War—that is to say, pure, simple, barefaced spoliation—has its root deep in the human heart, in the organization of man, in the universal motives which actuate the social world, namely, desire of happiness and repugnance to pain,—in short, in that principle of our nature called self-interest.

I am not sorry to find myself arraigning that principle, for I have been accused of devoting to it an idolatrous worship, of representing its effects as productive only of happiness to mankind, and even of elevating it above the principle of sympathy, of disinterestedness,

and of self-sacrifice. In truth, I have not so esteemed it; I have only proved beyond the possibility of doubt its existence and its omnipotence. I should ill appreciate that omnipotence, and I should do violence to my own convictions, in representing personal interest as the universal actuating motive of the human race, did I fail now to point out the disturbing causes to which it gives rise, just as I formerly pointed out the harmonious laws of the social order which spring from it.

Man, as we have already said, has an invincible desire to support himself, to improve his condition, and to attain happiness, or what he conceives to be happiness, at least to approximate towards it. For the same reason he shuns pain and toil.

Now labour, or the exertion we make in order to cause nature to co-operate in production, is in itself toil or fatigue. For this reason, it is repugnant to man, and he does not submit to it, except for the sake of avoiding a still greater evil.

Some have maintained philosophically that labour is not an evil but a good, and they are right, if we take into account its results. It is a comparative good; or if it be an evil, it is an evil which saves us from greater evils. This is precisely the reason why men have so great a tendency to shun labour when they think that, without having recourse to it, they may be able to reap its results.

Others maintain that labour is *in itself* a good; and that, independently of its productive results, it elevates, strengthens, and purifies man's character, and is to him a source of health and enjoyment. All this is strictly true; and it is an additional evidence to us of the marvellous fertility of those final intentions which the Creator has displayed in all parts of His works. Apart altogether from the productions which are its direct results, labour promises to man, as a supplementary recompense, a sound mind in a sound body; and it is not more true that idleness is the parent of every vice than that labour is the parent of many virtues.

But this does not at all interfere with the natural and unconquerable inclinations of the human heart, or with that feeling which prompts us not to desire labour for its own sake, but to compare it constantly with its results; not to desire to expend a great effort on what can be accomplished with a smaller effort; not of two efforts to choose the more severe. Nor is our endeavour to diminish the relation which the effort bears to the result inconsistent with our desire, when we have once acquired some leisure, to

devote that leisure to new labours suited to our tastes, with the prospect of thus securing a new and additional recompense.

With reference to all this, universal facts are decisive. At all times, and everywhere, we find man regarding labour as undesirable, and satisfaction as the thing in his condition which makes him compensation for his labour. At all times, and everywhere, we find him endeavouring to lighten his toil by calling in the aid, whenever he can obtain it, of animals, of the wind, of water-power, of steam, of natural forces, or, alas! of his fellow-creature, when he succeeds in enslaving him. In this last case,—I repeat, for it is too apt to be forgotten,—labour is not diminished, but displaced.\*

Man, being thus placed between two evils, want or labour, and urged on by self-interest, seeks to discover whether, by some means or other, he cannot get rid of both. It is then that spoliation presents itself to him as a solution of the problem.

He says to himself: "I have not, it is true, any means of procuring the things necessary for my subsistence and enjoyments—food, clothing, and lodging—unless these things are previously produced by labour. But it is by no means indispensable that this should be *my own* labour. It is enough that they should be produced by the labour of *some one*, provided I can get the mastery."

Such is the origin of war.

I shall not dwell upon its consequences.

When things come to this, that one man, or one nation, devotes itself to labour, and another man, or another nation, waits on till that labour is accomplished, in order to devote itself to rapine, we can see at a glance how much human power is thrown away.

On the one hand, the spoliator has not succeeded as he desired in getting quit of every kind of labour. Armed robbery exacts efforts, and sometimes very severe efforts. While the producer devotes his time to the creation of products fitted to yield satisfactions, the spoliator employs his time in devising the means of robbing him. But when the work of violence has been accomplished, or attempted, the objects calculated to yield satisfaction are neither more nor less abundant than before. They may minister to the wants of a different set of people, but not of more wants. Thus all the exertions which the spoliator has made with a view to spoliation, and the exertions also which he has failed to make with

\* We forget this, when we propose the question, Is slave labour dearer or cheaper than free labour?

a view to production, are entirely lost, if not for him, at least for society.

Nor is this all. In most cases an analogous loss takes place on the side of the producer. It is not likely that he will wait for the violence with which he is menaced without taking some precaution for his own protection ; and all precautions of this kind—arms, fortifications, munitions, drill—are labour, and labour lost for ever, not to him who expects security from this labour, but to mankind at large.

But should the producer, after undergoing this double labour, not esteem himself able to resist the threatened violence, it is still worse for society, and power is thrown away on a much greater scale ; for, in that case, labour will be given up altogether, no one being disposed to produce in order to be plundered.

If we regard the manner in which the human faculties are affected on both sides, the moral consequences of spoliation will be seen to be no less disastrous.

Providence has designed that man should devote himself to pacific combats with natural agents, and should reap directly from nature the fruits of his victory. When he obtains this mastery over natural agents only by obtaining a mastery over his fellow-creatures, his mission is changed, and quite another direction is given to his faculties. It is seen how great the difference is between the producer and the spoliator, as regards *foresight*—foresight which becomes assimilated in some degree to *providence*, for to *foresee* is also to *provide against* [*prévoir c'est aussi pourvoir*].

The producer sets himself to learn the relation between cause and effect. For this purpose, he studies the laws of the physical world, and seeks to make them more and more useful auxiliaries. If he turns his regards on his fellow-men, it is to foresee their wants, and to provide for them, on condition of reciprocity.

The spoliator does not study nature. If he turns his regards on his fellow-men, it is to watch them as the eagle watches his prey, for the purpose of enfeebling and surprising them.

The same differences are observable in the other faculties, and extend to men's ideas.\* . . . .

Spoliation by means of war is not an accidental, isolated, and transient fact ; it is a fact so general and so constant as not to give place, as regards permanence, to labour itself.

Point me out any country of the world where of two races, conquerors and conquered, the one does not domineer over the other.

\* See the author's brochure, *Baccalauréat et Socialisme*.—EDITOR.



Show me in Europe, in Asia, or among the islands of the sea, a favoured spot still occupied by the primitive inhabitants. If migrations of population have spared no country, war has been equally widespread.

Its traces are universal. Apart from rapine and bloodshed, public opinion outraged, and faculties and talents perverted, war has everywhere left other traces behind it, among which we must reckon slavery and aristocracy. . . . .

Not only has the march of spoliation kept pace with the creation of wealth, but the spoliators have seized upon accumulated riches, upon capital in all its forms; and, in particular, they have fixed their regards upon capital in the shape of landed property. The last step was taking possession of man himself. For human powers and faculties being the instruments of labour, they found it a shorter method to lay hold of these powers and faculties, than to seize upon their products. . . . .

It is impossible to calculate to what extent these great events have acted as disturbing causes, and as trammels on the natural progress of the human race. If we take into account the sacrifice of industrial power which war occasions, and the extent to which the diminished results of that power are concentrated in the hands of a limited number of conquerors, we may form to ourselves an idea of the causes of the destitution of the masses,—a destitution which in our days it is impossible to explain on the hypothesis of liberty. . . . .

*How the warlike spirit is propagated.*

Aggressive nations are subject to reprisals. They often attack others; sometimes they defend themselves. When they act on the defensive, they have on their side the feeling of justice, and the sacredness of the cause in which they are engaged. They may then exult in their courage, devotion, and patriotism. But, alas! they carry these same sentiments into their offensive wars—and where is their patriotism then? . . . . .

When two races, the one victorious and idle, the other vanquished and humiliated, occupy the same territory, everything calculated to awaken desire or arouse popular sympathies falls to the lot of the conquerors. Theirs are leisure, fêtes, taste for the arts, wealth, military parade, tournaments, grace, elegance, literature, poetry. For the conquered race nothing remains but ruined huts, squalid garments, the hard hand of labour, or the cold hand of charity. . . . .

The consequence is that the ideas and prejudices of the dominant race, always associated with military force, come to constitute public opinion. Men, women, and children, all unite in extolling the soldier's life in preference to that of the labourer, in preferring war to industry, and spoliation to production. The vanquished race shares the same sentiments, and when, at periods of transition, it succeeds in getting the better of its oppressors, it shows itself disposed to imitate them. What is this imitation but madness? . . . . .

*How war ends.*

Spoliation, like Production, having its source in the human heart, the laws of the social world would not be harmonious, even to the limited extent for which I contend, if the latter did not succeed in the long-run in overcoming the former. . . . .

## XX.

### RESPONSIBILITY.

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THERE is a leading idea which runs through the whole of this work, which pervades and animates every page and every line of it; and that idea is embodied in the opening words of the Christian Creed,—I BELIEVE IN GOD.

Yes, if this work differs from those of some other Economists, it is in this, that the latter appear to say, "We have but little faith in Providence, for we see that the natural laws lead to an abyss. And yet we say *laissez faire*! merely because we have still less faith in ourselves, and because we see clearly that all human efforts designed to arrest the action of these natural laws tend only to hasten the catastrophe."

Again, if this work differs from the writings of the Socialists, it is in this, that the latter say, "We pretend to believe in God, but in reality we believe only in ourselves; seeing that we have no faith in the maxim, *laissez faire*, and that we all give forth our social nostrums as infinitely superior to the plans of Providence."

For my part, I say, *laissez faire*; in other words, respect liberty, and the human initiative, . . . . .\*

\* . . . . . because I believe that it is under the direction of a superior impulse, because, Providence being unable to act in the social order except through the intervention of men's interests and men's wills, it is impossible that the natural resulting force of these interests, the common tendency of these wills, should be towards ultimate evil; for then we must conclude that it is not only man, or the human race, which proceeds onward towards error; but that God himself, being powerless or malevolent, urges on to evil His abortive creation. We believe, then, in liberty, because we believe in universal harmony, because we believe in God. Proclaiming in the name of faith, and formulating in the name of science, the Divine laws of the moral movement, living and pliant as these laws are, we spurn the narrow, sinister, unbending, and unalterable institutions which the blind leaders of the ignorant would substitute for this admirable mechanism. It would be absurd in the atheist to say, *laissez faire le hasard*!—seek not to control chance, or blind destiny. But, as believers, we have a right to say, seek not to control the order and justice of

. . . . . *Responsibility, solidarity*; mysterious laws, of which, apart from Revelation, it is impossible to appreciate the cause, but the effects and infallible action of which, on the progress of society, it is given us to appreciate—laws which, for the very reason that man is sociable, are linked together and act together, although they appear sometimes to run counter to each other; and

God—seek not to control the free action of the sovereign and infallible mover of all, or of that machinery of transmission which we call the human initiative. Liberty thus understood is no longer the anarchical deification of individualism. What we adore is above and beyond man who struggles; it is God who leads him.

We acknowledge, indeed, that man may err; yes, by the whole interval which separates a truth realized and established from one which is merely guessed at or suspected. But since man's nature is to seek, his destiny is to find. Truth, be it observed, has harmonious relations, necessary affinities, not only with the constitution of the understanding and the instincts of the heart, but also with the whole physical and moral conditions of our existence; so that even when we fail to grasp it as *absolute truth*, even when it fails to recommend itself to our innate sympathies as *just*, or to our ideal aspirations as *beautiful*, it, nevertheless, at length contrives to find acceptance in its practical and unobjectionable aspect as *useful*.

Liberty, we know, may lead to evil. But evil has itself its mission. Assuredly God has not thrown it across our path as a stumbling-block. He has placed it, as it were, on each side of that path as a warning,—as a means of keeping us in the right road, or bringing us back to it.

Man's will and inclinations, like inert molecules, have their law of gravitation. But, whilst things inanimate obey blindly their pre-existent and inevitable tendencies, in the case of beings indued with free will, the force of attraction and repulsion does not precede action; it springs from the voluntary determination which it seems to be waiting for, it is developed by the very act itself, and it reacts for or against the agent, by a progressive exertion of co-operation or resistance, which we term recompense or chastisement, pleasure or pain. If the direction of the will coincides with that of the general laws, if the act is *good*, happiness is the result. If it takes an opposite direction, if it is *bad*, something opposes or repels it; error gives rise to suffering, which is its remedy and its end. Thus, Evil is constantly opposed by Evil, and Good as constantly gives rise to Good. And we venture to say that, when seen from a higher point of view, the errors of free will are limited to certain oscillations, of a determinate extent, around a superior and necessary orbit; all persistent resistance, which would force this limit, tending only to destroy itself, without at all succeeding in disturbing the order of the sphere in which it moves.

This reactive force of co-operation or repulsion, which, by means of recompense and suffering, governs the orbit, at once voluntary and necessary, of the human race, this *law of gravitation of free beings* (of which Evil is only a necessary part) is distinguished by the terms Responsibility and Solidarity; the one brings back upon the individual; the other reflects and sends back on the social body the good or bad consequences of the act; the one applies to man as a solitary and self-governing individual; the other envelops him in an inevitable community of good and evil as a partial element, a dependent member, of a collective and imperishable being—man. *Responsibility* is the sanction of individual liberty, the foundation of the *rights* of man. *Solidarity* is the evidence of his social subordination, and his principle of duty. . . .

[A leaf of Bastiat's MS. being wanting, I hope to be pardoned for thus endeavouring to continue the idea of this religious introduction.]—R. F.

which would require to be viewed in their *ensemble*, and in their common action, if science, with its feeble optics and uncertain steps, were not reduced to method—that melancholy crutch which constitutes its strength whilst it reveals its weakness.

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*Nosce te ipsum*—know thyself: this, according to the oracle, is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the moral and political sciences.

As we have elsewhere remarked, in what concerns man or human society, Harmony can never mean Perfection, but only Improvement. Now improvement or perfectibility implies always, to a certain extent, imperfection in the future as well as in the past. If man could ever find his way into the promised land of *absolute Good*, he would no longer have occasion to use his understanding and his senses—he would be no longer man.

Evil exists. It is inherent in human infirmity. It manifests itself in the moral as in the material world; in the masses, as in the individual; in the whole as in the part. But because the eye may suffer and be lost, does the physiologist overlook the harmonious mechanism of that admirable organ? Does he deny the ingenious structure of the human body, because that body is subject to pain, to disease, and to death—to such extremity of suffering as caused Job in the depth of his despair, “to say to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister”? In the same way, because the social order will never bring mankind to the fancied haven of absolute good, is the economist to refuse to recognise all that is marvellous in the organization of the social order—an organization prepared with a view to the constantly-increasing diffusion of knowledge, of morality, and of happiness?

Strange! that we should deny to economic science the same right to admire the natural order of things which we concede to physiology. For, after all, what difference is there between the individual and the collective being, as regards the harmony displayed by final causes? The individual, no doubt, comes into existence, grows and is developed, educates and improves himself as life advances, until the time comes when his light and life are to be

communicated to others. At that moment everything about him is clothed in the hues of beauty; all breathes grace and joy; all is expansion, affection, benevolence, love, and harmony. For a while, his intelligence continues to be enlarged and confirmed, as if to qualify him to be the guide of those whom he has just called to tread the crooked paths of human existence. But soon his beauty fades, his grace disappears, his senses are blunted, his body becomes feeble, his memory clouded, his thoughts less bright; his affections even (except in the case of some choice spirits) get clogged with egotism, and lose that charm, that freshness, that sincerity and simplicity, that depth and disinterestedness, which distinguished his earlier days;—the poetry of life has fled. In spite of all the ingenious precautions which nature has taken to retard his dissolution—precautions which physiology sums up in the phrase *vis medicatrix*—he treads back the path of improvement, and loses, one after another, all his acquisitions by the way; he goes on from privation to privation, until he reaches that which is the greatest of all, because it includes all. The genius of optimism itself can discover nothing consolatory, nothing harmonious in this slow but unavoidable decadence—in seeing that being once so proud and so beautiful descending sadly into the tomb. . . . The tomb! . . . But is not that the door of another habitation? . . . It is thus, when science stops short, that religion\* renews, even for the individual, in another region, the concordant harmonies which have been interrupted here.†

Despite this fatal *dénodement*, does physiology cease to see in the human body the most perfect masterpiece which ever proceeded from its Creator's hands?

But if the social body is liable to suffering, if it may suffer even to death, it is not for that reason finally condemned. Let men say what they will, it has not, in perspective, after having been elevated to its apogee, an inevitable decline. The crash of empires even is not the retrogradation of humanity, and the ancient models of

\* Religion (*religare*, to bind), that which connects the present life with the future, the living with the dead, time with eternity, the finite with the infinite, man with God.

† May we not say that Divine Justice, which is so incomprehensible when we consider the lot of individuals, becomes striking when we reflect on the destinies of nations? Each man's life is a drama which is begun on one theatre and completed on another. But the same thing cannot be said of the life of nations. That instructive tragedy begins and ends upon earth. This is the reason why history becomes a holy lesson; it is the justice of Providence.—DE CUSTINE'S *La Russie*.

civilisation have only been dissolved in order to make room for a civilisation still more advanced. Dynasties may be extinguished; the forms of government may be changed; yet the progress of the human race may not the less be continued. The fall of States is like the fall of leaves in autumn. It fertilizes the soil; contributes to the return of spring; and promises to future generations a richer vegetation, and more abundant harvests. Nay, even in a purely national point of view, this theory of necessary decadence is as false as it is antiquated. In the life of no people can we possibly perceive any cause of inevitable decline. The analogy which has so frequently given rise to a comparison between a nation and an individual, and led men to attribute to the one as to the other an infancy and an old age, is nothing better than a false metaphor. A community is being incessantly renewed. Let its institutions be elastic and flexible, so that in place of coming in collision with those new powers to which the human mind gives birth, they shall be so organized as to admit of this expansion of intellectual energy and accommodate themselves to it; and we see no reason why such institutions should not flourish in eternal youth. But whatever may be thought of the fragility and fall of empires, it must never be forgotten that society, which in its aggregate represents the human race, is constituted upon more solid bases. The more we study it, the more we shall be convinced that it too, like the human body, is provided with a *curative force*, a *vis medicatrix*, which delivers it from the evils which afflict it; and that it carries in its bosom, moreover, a *progressive force*; and is by the latter urged on to improvements to which we can assign no limits.

If individual evil, then, does not weaken or invalidate physiological harmony, still less does collective evil weaken or invalidate social harmony.

But how are we to reconcile the existence of evil with the infinite goodness of God? I cannot explain what I do not understand.

All I shall say is, that this solution can no more be exacted from Political Economy than from Anatomy. These sciences, which are alike sciences of observation, study man as he is, without asking the Creator to reveal His impenetrable secrets.

Thus, I again repeat, harmony does not correspond with the idea of absolute perfection, but with that of indefinite improvement. It has pleased God to attach suffering to our nature, seeing that He has designed that in us feebleness should be anterior to force, ignorance to science, want to satisfaction, effort to result, acqui-

tion to possession, destitution to wealth, error to truth, experience to foresight. I submit without murmuring to this ordinance, being able, moreover, to imagine no other combination. But if, by a mechanism as simple as it is ingenious, He has provided *that all men should approximate to a common level, which is continually rising*, if He assures them—by the very action of what we denominate evil—both of the duration and the diffusion of progress, then am I not only content to bow myself under His bountiful and almighty hand,—I bless that hand, I worship it, I adore it.

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We have seen certain schools arise which have taken advantage of the insolubility (humanly speaking) of this question to embroil all others, as if it were given to our finite intelligence to comprehend and reconcile things which are infinite. Placing over the portal of social science this sentence, *God cannot desire evil*, they arrive at the following series of conclusions: "Evil exists in society; then society is not organized according to the designs of God. Let us change, and change again, and change continually this organization. Let us try about, and make experiments, until we have effaced all trace of suffering from the world. By that sign we shall know that the kingdom of God has come."

Nor is this all. These schools have been led to exclude from their social plans liberty as well as suffering, for liberty implies the possibility of error, and consequently the possibility of evil. Addressing their fellow-men, they say, "Allow us to organize you—don't you interfere—cease to compare, to judge, to decide anything by yourselves and for yourselves. We abhor the *laissez faire*; but we ask you to let things alone, and to let us alone. If we succeed in conducting you to perfect happiness, the infinite goodness of God will be vindicated."

Contradiction, inconsistency, presumption,—we ask which is most apparent in such language?

One sect among others, not very philosophical, but very noisy, promises to mankind unmixed felicity. Only deliver over to that sect the government of the human race, and in virtue of certain formulas, it makes bold to rid men of every painful sensation.

But if you do not accord a blind faith to the promises of that



sect, then, bringing forward that formidable and insoluble problem which has vexed philosophy since the beginning of the world, they summon you to reconcile the existence of evil with the infinite goodness of God. Do you hesitate? they accuse you of impiety.

Fourier rings the changes on this theme till he exhausts all its combinations.

" *Either God has not been able* to give us a social code of attraction, of justice, of truth, and of unity; in which case He has been unjust in giving us wants without the means of satisfying them :"

" *Or He has not desired to give it us*; and in that case He has deliberately persecuted us by creating designedly wants which it is impossible to satisfy :"

" *Or He is able, and has not desired*; in which case the principle of good would rival the principle of evil, having the power to establish good, and preferring to establish evil :"

" *Or He has desired, and has not been able*; in which case He is incapable of governing us, acknowledging and desiring good, but not having the power to establish it :"

" *Or He has been neither able nor willing*; in which case the principle of good is below the principle of evil, etc. :"

" *Or He has been both able and willing*; in which case the code exists, and it is for us to promulgate it, etc."

And Fourier is the prophet of this new revelation. Let us deliver ourselves up to him and to his disciples: Providence will then be justified, sensibility will change its nature, and suffering will disappear from the earth.

But how, I would ask, do these apostles of absolute good, these hardy logicians, who exclaim continually that "God being perfect, His work must be perfect also;" and who accuse us of impiety because we resign ourselves to human imperfection,—how, I say, do these men not perceive that, on the most favourable hypothesis, they are as impious as we are? I should like, indeed, that, under the reign of Messieurs Considérant, Hennequin, etc., no one in the world should ever lose his mother, or suffer from the toothache,—in which case he also might chant the litany, *Either God has not been able or has not been willing*;—I should like much that evil were to take flight to the infernal regions, retreating before the broad daylight of the Socialist revelation—that one of their plans, *phalanstère, crédit gratuit, anarchie, triade, atelier social*,\* and so

\* Allusion to Socialist Utopias of the day.—TRANSLATOR.

forth, had the power to rid us of all future evils. But would it annihilate suffering in the past? The infinite, observe, has no limits; and if there has existed on the earth since the beginning of the world a single sufferer, that is enough to render the problem of the infinite goodness of God insoluble in their point of view.

Let us beware, then, of linking the science of the finite to the mysteries of the infinite. Let us apply to the one reason and observation, and leave the other in the domain of revelation and of faith.

In all respects, and in every aspect, man is imperfect. In this world, at least, he encounters limits in all directions, and touches the finite at every point. His force, his intelligence, his affections, his life, have in them nothing absolute, and belong to a material mechanism which is subject to fatigue, to decay, and to death.

Not only is this so, but our imperfection is so great that we cannot even imagine perfection as existing either in ourselves or in the external world. Our minds are so much out of proportion to this idea of perfection that all our efforts to seize it are vain. The oftener we try to grasp it, the oftener it escapes us, and is lost in inextricable contradictions. Show me a perfect man, and you will show me a man who is exempt from suffering, and who has consequently neither wants, nor desires, nor sensations, nor sensibility, nor nerves, nor muscles; who can be ignorant of nothing, and consequently has neither the faculty of attention, nor judgment, nor reasoning, nor memory, nor imagination, nor brains; in short, you will show me a being who does not exist.

Thus, in whatever aspect we regard man, we must regard him as being subject to suffering. We must admit that evil has entered as one spring of action into the providential plan; and in place of seeking by chimerical means to annihilate it, our business is to study the part which it has to play, and the mission on which it is sent.

When it pleased God to create a being made up of wants, and of faculties to supply these wants, it was at the same time decreed that this being should be subject to suffering; for, apart from suffering, we could form no idea of wants, and, apart from wants, we could form no idea of utility, or of the use and object of any of our faculties. All that constitutes our greatness has its root in what constitutes our weakness.

Urged on by innumerable impulses, and indued with an intelli-

gence which enlightens our exertions, and enables us to appreciate their results, we have *free will* to guide and direct us.

But free will implies error as possible, and error in its turn implies suffering as its inevitable effect. I defy any one to tell me what it is to *choose freely*, if it be not to run the risk of making a bad choice, and what it is to make a bad choice if it be not to prepare the way for suffering.

And this is, no doubt, the reason why those schools who are content with nothing less than absolute good are all materialist and fatalist. They are unable to admit free will. They see that liberty of acting proceeds from liberty of choosing; that liberty of choosing supposes the possibility of error; and that the possibility of error is the possibility of evil. Now, in an artificial society, such as our *organisateurs* invent, evil cannot make its appearance. For that reason, men must be exempted from the possibility of error; and the surest means to accomplish that is to deprive them of the faculty of acting and choosing—in other words, of free will. It has been truly said that Socialism is despotism incarnate.

In presence of these fooleries, it may be asked, By what right does the organizer of artificial systems venture to think, act, and choose, not only for himself, but for every one else? for, after all, he belongs to the human race, and in that respect is fallible; and he is so much the more fallible in proportion as he pretends to extend the range of his science and his will.

No doubt the *organisateur* finds this objection radically unfounded, inasmuch as it confounds him with the rest of mankind. But he who professes to discover the defects of the Divine workmanship, and has undertaken to recast it, is more than a man; he is an oracle, and more than an oracle. . . .

Socialism has two elements: the frenzy of contradiction, and the madness of pride!

But when free will, which is the foundation of the whole argument, is denied, is not this the proper place to demonstrate its existence? I shall take good care not to enter upon any such demonstration. Every one feels that his will is free, and that is enough. I feel this, not vaguely, but a hundred times more intensely than if it had been demonstrated to me by Aristotle or by Euclid. I feel it with conscious joy when I have made a choice which does me honour; with remorse, when I have made a choice which degrades me. I find, moreover, that all men by their

conduct affirm their belief in free will, although some deny it in their writings.\* All men compare motives, deliberate, determine, retract, try to foresee; all give advice, are indignant at injustice, admire acts of devotion. Then all acknowledge in themselves and in others the existence of free will, without which, choice, advice, foresight, morality, virtue, are impossible. Let us take care how we seek to demonstrate what is admitted by universal practice. Absolute fatalists are no more to be found, even at Constantinople, than absolute sceptics are to be met with at Alexandria. Those who proclaim themselves such may be fools enough to try to persuade others, but they are powerless to convince themselves. They prove with much subtlety that they have no will of their own; but when we see that they act as if they had it, we need not dispute with them.

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Here, then, we are placed in the midst of nature and of our fellow-men—urged on by impulses, wants, appetites, desires—provided with various faculties enabling us to operate on man and on things—determined to action by our free will—indued with intelligence, which is perfectible and therefore imperfect, and which, if it enlightens us, may also deceive us with reference to the consequences of our actions.

Every human action—giving rise to a series of good or bad consequences, of which some fall back on the agent, and others affect his family, his neighbours, his fellow-citizens, and sometimes mankind at large—every such action causes the vibration of two chords, the sounds of which are oracular utterances—Responsibility and Solidarity.

As regards the man who acts, Responsibility is the natural link which exists between the act and its consequences. It is a complete system of *inevitable* Rewards and Punishments which no man has invented, which acts with all the regularity of the great natural laws, and which may, consequently, be regarded as of Divine institution. The evident object of Responsibility is to restrain the

\* "As to the doctrine of necessity, no one believes it. If a man should give me arguments that I do not see, though I could not answer them, should I believe that I do not see? . . . All theory is against the freedom of the will; all experience for it. . . . I *know* that I am free, and there's an end on't."—*Dr Johnson*.—  
TRANSLATOR.

number of hurtful actions, and increase the number of such as are useful.

This mechanism, which is at once corrective and progressive, remunerative and retributive, is so simple, so near us, so identified with our whole being, so perpetually in action, that not only can we not ignore it, but we see that, like Evil, it is one of those phenomena without which our whole life would be to us unintelligible.

The book of Genesis tells us that, the first man having been driven from the terrestrial paradise, because he had learned to distinguish between good and evil, *sciens bonum et malum*, God pronounced this sentence on him: *In laboribus comedes ex terrâ cunctis diebus vitæ tuæ. Spinæ et tribulos germinabit tibi. In sudore vultûs tui vesceris pane, donec revertaris in terram de quâ sumptus es: quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris.\**

Here, then, we have good and evil—or human nature. Here we have acts and habits producing good or bad consequences—or human nature. Here we have labour, sweat, thorns, tribulation, and death—or human nature.

Human nature, I say; for to choose, to be mistaken, to suffer, to rectify our errors—in a word, all the elements which make up the idea of Responsibility—are so inherent in our sensitive, rational, and free nature, they are so much of the essence of that nature itself, that I defy the most fertile imagination to conceive for man another mode of existence.

That man might have lived in an Eden, *in paradiso voluptatis*, ignorant of good and evil, we can indeed believe, but we cannot comprehend it, so profoundly has our nature been transformed.

We find it impossible to separate the idea of *life* from that of sensibility; that of sensibility from that of *pleasure* and *pain*; that of pleasure and pain from that of *reward* and *punishment*; that of *intelligence* from that of *liberty* and *choice*, and all these ideas from the idea of Responsibility; for it is the aggregate of all these ideas which gives us the idea of Being or Existence, so that when we think upon God, our reason, which tells us that He is incapable of suffering, remains confounded—so inseparable are our notions of sensibility and *existence*.

\* “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. . . . In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”—*Gen.* iii. 17, 18, 19.

It is this undoubtedly which renders *Faith* the necessary complement of our destinies. It is the only bond which is possible between the creature and the Creator, seeing that God is, and always will be, to our reason, incomprehensible, *Deus absconditus*.

In order to be convinced how hard Responsibility presses us, and shuts us in on every side, we have only to attend to the most simple facts.

Fire burns us; the collision of bodies bruises us. If we were not indued with sensibility, or if our sensibility were not painfully affected by the approach of fire, and by rude contact with other bodies, we should be exposed to death every moment.

From earliest infancy to extreme old age, our life is only a long apprenticeship. By frequently falling, we learn to walk. By rude and reiterated experiments, we are taught to avoid heat, cold, hunger, thirst, excess. Do not let us complain of the roughness of this experience. If it were not so, it would teach us nothing.

The same thing holds in the social order. From the unhappy consequences of cruelty, of injustice, of fear, of violence, of deceit, of idleness, we learn to be gentle, just, brave, moderate, truthful, and industrious. Experience is protracted; it will never come to an end; but it will never cease to be efficacious.

Man being so constituted, it is impossible that we should not recognise in responsibility the mainspring to which social progress is specially confided. It is the crucible in which experience is elaborated. They, then, who believe in the superiority of times past, like those who despair of the future, fall into the most manifest contradiction. Without being aware of it, they extol error, and calumniate knowledge. It is as if they said, "The more I have learnt, the less I know. The more clearly I discern what is hurtful, the more I shall be exposed to it." Were humanity constituted on such a basis as this, it would in a short time cease to exist.

Man's starting-point is ignorance and inexperience. The farther we trace back the chain of time, the more destitute we find men of that knowledge which is fitted to direct their choice,—of knowledge which can be acquired only in one of two ways; by reflection or by experience.

Now it so happens that man's every action includes, not one consequence only, but a series of consequences. Sometimes the first is good, and the others bad; sometimes the first is bad, and the others good. From one of our determinations there may pro-

ceed good and bad consequences, combined in variable proportions. We may venture to term *vicious* those actions which produce more bad than good effects, and *virtuous* those which produce a greater amount of good than of evil.

When one of our actions produces a first consequence which we approve, followed by many other consequences which are hurtful, so that the aggregate of bad predominates over the aggregate of good, such an action tends to limit and restrain itself, and to be abandoned in proportion as we acquire more foresight.

Men naturally perceive the immediate consequences of their actions before they perceive those consequences which are more remote. Whence it follows that what we have denominated vicious acts are more multiplied in times of ignorance. Now the repetition of the same acts constitutes habit. Ages of ignorance, then, are ages of bad habits.

Consequently, they are ages of bad laws, for acts which are repeated, habits which are general, constitute manners, upon which laws are modelled, and of which, so to speak, they are the official expression.

How is this ignorance to be put an end to? How can men be taught to know the second, the third, and all the subsequent consequences of their acts and their habits?

The first means is the exercise of that faculty of discerning and reasoning which Providence has vouchsafed them.

But there is another still more sure and efficacious,—experience. When the act is once done, the consequences follow inevitably. The first effect is good; for it is precisely to obtain that result that the act is done. But the second may inflict suffering, the third still greater suffering, and so on.

Then men's eyes are opened, and light begins to appear. That action is not repeated; we sacrifice the good produced by the first and immediate consequence, for fear of the still greater evil which the subsequent consequences entail. If the act has become a habit, and if we have not power to give it up, we at least give way to it with hesitation and repugnance, and after an inward conflict. We do not recommend it; on the contrary, we blame it, and persuade our children against it; and we are certainly on the road of progress.

If, on the other hand, the act is one which is useful, but from which we refrain, because its first, and only known, consequence is painful, and we are ignorant of the favourable ulterior consequences, experience teaches us the effects of abstaining from it. A

savage, for instance, has had enough to eat. He does not foresee that he will be hungry to-morrow. Why should he labour to-day? To work is present pain—no need of foresight to know that. He therefore continues idle. But the day passes, another succeeds, and as it brings hunger, he must then work under the spur of necessity. This is a lesson which, frequently repeated, cannot fail to develop foresight. By degrees idleness is regarded in its true light. We brand it; we warn the young against it. Public opinion is now on the side of industry.

But in order that experience should afford us this lesson, in order that it should fulfil its mission, develop foresight, explain the series of consequences which flow from our actions, pave the way to good habits, and restrain bad ones—in a word, in order that experience should become an effective instrument of progress and moral improvement—the law of Responsibility must come into operation. The bad consequences must make themselves felt, and *evil* must for the moment chastise us.

Undoubtedly it would be better that evil had no existence; and it might perhaps be so if man was constituted differently from what he is. But taking man as he is, with his wants, his desires, his sensibility, his free will, his power of choosing and erring, his faculty of bringing into play a cause which necessarily entails consequences which it is not in our power to elude as long as the cause exists; in such circumstances, the only way of removing the cause is to enlighten the will, rectify the choice, abandon the vicious act or the vicious habit; and nothing can effect this but the law of Responsibility.

We may affirm, then, that man being constituted as he is, evil is not only necessary but useful. It has a mission, and enters into the universal harmony. Its mission is to destroy its own cause, to limit its own operation, to concur in the realization of good, and to stimulate progress.

We may elucidate this by some examples which the subject which now engages us—Political Economy—presents.

*Frugality. Prodigality.*

*Monopolies.*

*Population.\* . . . .*

\* The interesting developments which the author intended to present here by way of illustrations, and of which he indicated beforehand the character, he unfortunately did not live to write. The reader may supply the want by referring to chapter xvi. of this work, and likewise to chapters vii. and xi. of Bastiat's pamphlet, *Ce qu'on voit et Ce qu'on ne voit pas*.—NOTE OF THE EDITOR.



Responsibility guards itself by three sanctions:—

1st, *The natural sanction*; which is that of which I have just been speaking—the necessary suffering or recompense which certain acts and habits entail.

2d, *The religious sanction*; or the punishments and rewards of another life, which are annexed to acts and habits, according as they are vicious or virtuous.

3d, *The legal sanction*; or the punishments and rewards decreed beforehand by society.

Of these three sanctions, I confess that the one which appears to me fundamental is the first. In saying this I cannot fail to run counter to sentiments which I respect; but I must be permitted to declare my opinion.

Is an act vicious because a revelation from above has declared it to be so? Or has revelation declared it vicious because it produces consequences which are bad? These questions will probably always form a subject of controversy between the philosophical and the religious mind.

I believe that Christianity can range itself on the side of those who answer the last of these two questions in the affirmative. Christianity itself tells us that it has not come to oppose the natural law, but to confirm it.\* We can scarcely admit that God, who is the supreme principle of order, should have made an arbitrary classification of human actions, that He should have denounced punishment on some, and promised reward to others, and this without any regard to the effects of these actions, that is to say, to their discordance, or concordance, in the universal harmony.

When He said, "Thou shalt not kill—thou shalt not steal," no doubt He had in view to prohibit certain acts because they were hurtful to man and to society, which are His work.

Regard to consequences is so powerful a consideration with man

\* "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another."—*Romans* ii. 14, 15. See also *Bishop Butler's 3d Sermon, on Human Nature*: "Nothing," says he, "can be more evident than that, *exclusive of revelation*, man cannot be considered as a creature left by his Maker to act at random, and live at large up to the extent of his natural power, as passion, humour, wilfulness, happen to carry him; which is the condition brute creatures are in. But that, *from his make, constitution, or nature*, he is in the strictest and most proper sense a law to himself. He hath the rule of right within. What is wanting is only that he honestly attend to it." — BUTLER'S *Works*, vol. ii. p. 65.—TRANSLATOR.

that if he belonged to a religion that forbade acts which universal experience proved to be useful, or that sanctioned the observance of habits palpably hurtful, I believe that such a religion could not be maintained, but that it would at length give way before the progress of knowledge. Men could not long suppose that the deliberate design of God was to cause evil and to interdict good.

The question which I broach here has perhaps no very important bearing on Christianity, since it ordains only what is good in itself, and forbids only what is bad.

But the question I am now examining is this, whether in principle the religious sanction goes to confirm the natural sanction, or whether the natural sanction goes for nothing in presence of the religious sanction, and should give way to the latter when they come into collision.

Now, if I am not mistaken, the tendency of ministers of religion is to pay little attention to the natural sanction. For this they have an unanswerable reason: "God has ordained this; God has forbidden that." There is no longer any room left for reasoning, for God is infallible and omnipotent. Although the act should lead to the destruction of the world, we must march on like blind men, just as we would do if God addressed us personally, and showed us heaven and hell.

It may happen, even in the true religion, that actions in themselves innocent are forbidden by Divine authority. To exact interest for money, for example, has been pronounced sinful. Had mankind given obedience to that prohibition, the race would long since have disappeared from the face of the earth. For without interest the accumulation of capital is impossible; without capital there can be no co-operation of anterior and present labour; without this co-operation there can be no society; and without society man cannot exist.

On the other hand, on examining the subject of interest more nearly, we are convinced that not only is it useful in its general effects, but that there is in it nothing contrary to charity and truth—certainly not more than there is in the stipend of a minister of religion, and less than in certain perquisites belonging to his office.

Thus, all the power of the Church has not been able for an instant to supersede, in this respect, the nature of things. The most which has been accomplished is to cause to be disguised one

of the forms, and that the least usual form, of exacting interest, in a number of very trifling transactions.

In the same way, as regards precepts; when the Gospel says, "Unto him who smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other," it gives a precept which, if taken literally, would destroy the right of legitimate defence in the individual, and consequently in society. Now, without this right, the existence of the human race is impossible.

And what has happened? For eighteen hundred years this saying has been repeated as a mere conventionalism.

But there is a still graver consideration. There are false religions in the world. These necessarily admit precepts and prohibitions which are in antagonism with the natural sanctions attached to certain acts. Now, of all the means which have been given us to distinguish in a matter so important, the true from the false, that which emanates from God from that which proceeds from imposture, none is more certain, more decisive, than an examination of the good or bad consequences which a doctrine is calculated to have on the advancement and progress of mankind—*a fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos*.

*Legal sanction.*—Nature having prepared a system of punishments and rewards, in the shape of the effects which necessarily proceed from each act and from each habit, what is the province of human law? There are only three courses it can take—to allow Responsibility to act, to chime in with it, or to oppose it.

It seems to me beyond doubt that when a legal sanction is brought into play, it ought only to be to give more force, regularity, certainty, and efficacy to the natural sanction. These two powers should co-operate, and not run counter to each other.

For example, if fraud is in the first instance profitable to him who has recourse to it, in the long-run it is more frequently fatal to him; for it injures his credit, his honour, and his reputation. It creates around him distrust and suspicion. It is, besides, always hurtful to the man who is the victim of it. Finally, it alarms society, and obliges it to employ part of its force in expensive precautions. The sum of evil, then, far exceeds the sum of good. This is what constitutes natural Responsibility, which acts constantly as a preventive and repressive check. We can understand, however, that the community does not choose to depend altogether on the slow action of necessary responsibility, and judges it fit to add a legal sanction to the natural sanction. In

that case, we may say that the legal sanction is only the natural sanction organized and reduced to rule. It renders punishment more immediate and more certain; it gives more publicity and authenticity to facts; it surrounds the suspected party with guarantees, and affords him a regular opportunity to exculpate himself if there be room for it; it rectifies the errors of public opinion, and calms down individual vengeance by substituting for it public retribution. In fine—and this perhaps is the essential thing—it does not destroy the lessons of experience.

We cannot, then, say that the legal sanction is illogical in principle, when it advances alongside the natural sanction and concurs in the same result. It does not follow, however, that the legal sanction ought in every case to be substituted for the natural sanction, and that human law is justified by the consideration alone that it acts in the sense of Responsibility.

The artificial distribution of punishments and rewards includes in itself, and at the expense of the community, an amount of inconvenience which it is necessary to take into account. The machinery of the legal sanction comes from men, is worked by men, and is costly.

Before submitting an action or a habit to organized repression, there is always this question to be asked:—

Does the excess of good which is obtained by the addition of legal repression to natural repression compensate the evil which is inherent in the repressive machinery?

In other words, is the evil of artificial repression greater or less than the evil of impunity?

In the case of theft, of murder, of the greater part of crimes and delicts, the question admits of no doubt. Every nation of the earth represses these crimes by public force.

But when we have to do with a habit which it is difficult to account for, and which may spring from moral causes of delicate appreciation, the question is different, and it may very well be that although this habit is universally esteemed hurtful and vicious, the law should remain neuter, and hand it over to natural responsibility.

In the first place, this is the course which the law ought to take in the case of an action or a habit which is doubtful, which one part of the population thinks good and another part bad. You think me wrong in following the Catholic ritual; I think you

wrong in adopting the Lutheran faith. Let God judge of that. Why should I aim a blow at you, or why should you aim a blow at me? If it is not right that we should strike at each other, how can it be right that we should delegate a third party, the depository of the public force, to chastise one of us for the satisfaction of the other?

You allege that I am wrong in teaching my child the moral and natural sciences; I believe that you are wrong in teaching your child Greek and Latin exclusively. Let us act on both sides according to our feeling of what is right. Let our families be acted on by the law of Responsibility. That law will punish the one who is wrong. Do not invoke human law, which may punish the one who is right.

You assert that I would do better to pursue such or such a career, to work according to your process, to employ an iron in place of a wooden plough, to sow thin in place of sowing thick, to purchase in the East rather than in the West. I maintain just the contrary. I have made all my calculations; and surely I am more interested than you in not falling into any mistake in matters upon the right ordering of which my welfare, my existence, and the happiness of my family depend, while in your case they interest only your *amour-propre* and the credit of your systems. Give me as much advice as you please, but constrain me to nothing. I decide upon *my own proper risk and peril*, and surely that is enough without the tyrannical intervention of law.

We see that, in almost all the important actions of life, it is necessary to respect free will, to rely on the individual judgment of men, on that inward light which God has given them for their guidance, and after that to leave Responsibility to do its own work.

The intervention of law in analogous cases, over and above the very great inconvenience of opening the way equally to error and to truth, has the still greater inconvenience of paralyzing intelligence itself, of extinguishing that light which is the inheritance of humanity and the pledge of progress.

But even when an action, a habit, a practice is acknowledged by public good sense to be bad, vicious, and immoral, when it is so beyond doubt; when those who give themselves up to it are the first to blame themselves,—that is not enough to justify the intervention of law. As I have already said, it is necessary also to know if, in adding to the bad consequences of this vice the bad consequences inherent in all legal repression, we do not produce,

in the long-run, a sum of evil which exceeds the good which the legal sanction adds to the natural sanction.

We might examine, for instance, the evils which would result from the application of the legal sanction to the repression of idleness, prodigality, avarice, egotism, cupidity, ambition.

Let us take the case of idleness.

This is a very natural inclination, and there are not wanting men who join the chorus of the Italians when they celebrate the *dolce far niente*, and of Rousseau, when he says, *Je suis paresseux avec délices*. We cannot doubt, then, that idleness is attended with a certain amount of enjoyment. Were it not so, in fact, there would be no idleness in the world.

And yet there flows from this inclination a host of evils, so much so that the wisdom of nations has embodied itself in the proverb that *Idleness is the parent of every vice*.

The evils of idleness infinitely surpass the good; and it is necessary that the law of Responsibility should act in this matter with some energy, either as a lesson or as a spur, seeing that it is in fact by labour that the world has reached the state of civilization which it has now attained.

Now, considered either as a lesson or as a spur to action, what would a legal sanction add to the providential sanction? Suppose we had a law to punish idleness. In what precise degree would such a law quicken the national activity?

If we could find this out, we should have an exact measure of the benefit resulting from the law. I confess I can form no idea of this part of the problem. But we must ask, at what price would this benefit, whatever it were, be purchased; and surely little reflection is needed in order to see that the certain inconveniences of legal repression would far exceed its problematical advantages.

In the first place, there are in France thirty-six millions of inhabitants. It would be necessary to exercise over them all a rigorous *surveillance*, to follow them into their fields, their workshops, to their domestic circles. Think of the number of functionaries, the increase of taxes, etc., which would be the result.

Then, those who are now industrious—and the number, thank God, is great—would be, no less than the idle, subjected to this intolerable inquisition. It is surely an immense inconvenience to subject a hundred innocent people to degrading measures, in

order to punish one guilty person whom nature has herself taken it in hand to chastise.

And then, when does idleness begin? In the case of each man brought to justice, the most minute and delicate inquiries would be necessary. Was the accused really idle, or did he merely take necessary repose? Was he sick, or was he meditating, or was he saying his prayers, etc.? How could we appreciate all those shades of difference? Did he work harder and longer in the morning in order to have a little more time at his disposal in the evening? How many witnesses, judges, juries, policemen, would be needed, how much resistance, espionage, and hatred would be engendered! . . . . .

Next we should have the chapter of judicial blunders. How great an amount of idleness would escape! and, in return, how many industrious people would go to redeem in prison the inactivity of a day by the inactivity of a month!

With these consequences and many others before our eyes, we say, Let natural Responsibility do its own work. And we do well in saying so.

The Socialists, who never decline to have recourse to despotism in order to accomplish their ends—for the end is everything with them—have branded Responsibility under the name of *individualism*,—and have then tried to annihilate it, and absorb it in the sphere of action of a *solidarity* extended beyond all natural bounds.

The consequences of this perversion of the two great springs of human perfectibility are fatal. There is no longer any dignity, any liberty, for man. For, from the moment that the man who acts is not personally answerable for the good or bad consequences of his actions, his right to act singly and individually no longer exists. If each movement of the individual is to reflect back the series of its effects on society at large, the initiative of each such movement can no longer be left to the individual—it belongs to society. The community alone must decide all, and regulate all,—education, food, wages, amusements, locomotion, affections, families, etc. Now, the law is the voice of society; the law is the legislator. Here, then, we have a flock and a shepherd,—less than that even, inert matter, and a workman. We see, then, to what point the suppression of Responsibility and of individualism would lead us.

To conceal this frightful design from the eyes of the vulgar, it was necessary to flatter their selfish passions by declaiming against

egotism. To the suffering classes Socialism says, "Do not trouble yourselves to examine whether your sufferings are to be ascribed to the law of Responsibility. There are fortunate people in the world, and in virtue of the law of Solidarity they ought to share their prosperity with you." And for the purpose of paving the way to the degrading level of a factitious, official, legal, constrained, and unnatural Solidarity, they erect spoliation into a system, they twist all our notions of justice, and they exalt that individualist sentiment, which they were thought to have proscribed, up to the highest point of power and perversity. Their whole system is thus of a piece,—negation of the harmonies which spring from liberty in the principle,—despotism and slavery in the result,—immorality in the means.

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Every effort to divert the natural course of responsibility is a blow aimed at justice, at liberty, at order, at civilisation, and at progress.

*At justice.* An act or a habit being assumed to exist, its good or bad consequences must follow necessarily. Were it possible, indeed, to suppress these consequences, there would doubtless be some advantage in suspending the action of the natural law of responsibility. But the only result to which a written law could lead would be that the good effects of a bad action would be reaped by the author of that action, and that its bad effects would fall back on a third party, or upon the community; which has certainly the special aspect of injustice.

Thus, modern societies are constituted on the principle that the father of a family should rear and educate his children. And it is this principle which restrains within just limits the increase and distribution of population; each man acting under a sense of responsibility. Men are not all indued with the same amount of foresight; and\* in large towns improvidence is allied with immorality. We have nowadays a regular budget, and an administration, for the purpose of collecting children abandoned by their parents; no inquiry discourages this shameful desertion, and a

\* The conclusion of this chapter is little more than a series of notes thrown together, without transitions or developments.—EDITOR.



constantly-increasing number of destitute children inundates our poorer districts.

Here, then, we have a peasant who marries late in life, in order not to be overburdened with a family, obliged to bring up the children of others. He will not inculcate foresight on his son. Another lives in continence, and we see him taxed to bring up a set of bastards. In a religious point of view, his conscience is tranquil, but in a human point of view he must call himself a fool. . . .

We do not pretend here to enter on the grave question of public charity, we wish only to make this essential observation, that the more a State is centralized, the more that it turns natural responsibility into factitious solidarity, the more it takes away from consequences (which thenceforth affect those who have no connexion with their cause) their providential character of justice, chastisement, and preventive restraint.

When Government cannot avoid charging itself with a service which ought to remain within the domain of private activity, it ought at least to allow the responsibility to rest as nearly as possible where it would naturally fall. Thus, in the question of founding hospitals, the principle being that the father and mother should bring up the child, the law should exhaust every means of endeavouring to enforce this. Failing the parents, this burden should fall on the commune; and failing the commune, on the department. Do you desire to multiply foundlings *ad infinitum*? Declare that the State will take charge of them. It would be still worse if France should undertake to maintain the children of the Chinese, and *vice versa*. . . .

It is, in truth, a singular thing that we should be always endeavouring to make laws to check the evils of responsibility! Will it never be understood that we do not annihilate these evils—we only turn them into a new channel? The result is one injustice the more, and one lesson the less. . . .

How is the world to be improved if it be not by every man learning to discharge his duty better? And will each man not discharge his duties better in proportion as he has more to suffer by neglecting or violating them? If social action is to be mixed up in the work of responsibility, it ought to be in order to second it, not to thwart it, to concentrate its effects, not to abandon them to chance.

It has been said that opinion is the mistress of the world. As-

surely, in order that opinion should have its proper sway it is necessary that it should be enlightened; and opinion is so much more enlightened in proportion as each man who contributes to form it perceives more clearly the connexion of causes and effects. Now nothing leads us to perceive this connexion better than experience, and experience, as we know, is personal, and the fruit of responsibility.

In the natural play, then, of this great law of responsibility we have a system of valuable teaching with which it is very imprudent to tamper.

If, by ill-considered combinations, you relieve men from responsibility for their actions, they may still be taught by theory—but no longer by experience. And I doubt if instruction which has never been sanctioned and confirmed by experience is not more dangerous than ignorance itself. . . . .

The *sense of responsibility* is eminently capable of improvement.

This is one of the most beautiful moral phenomena. There is nothing which we admire more in a man, in a class, in a nation, than the feeling of responsibility. It indicates superior moral culture, and an exquisite sensibility to the awards of public opinion. It may be, however, that the sense of responsibility is highly developed in one thing and very little in another. In France, among the educated classes, one would die of shame to be caught cheating at play or addicting oneself to solitary drinking. These things are laughed at among the peasants. But to traffic in political rights, to make merchandise of his vote, to be guilty of inconsistency, to cry out by turns *Vive le Roi! Vive la Ligue!* as the interest of the moment may prompt, these are things which our manners do not brand with shame.

The development of the sense of responsibility may be much aided by female intervention. . . . .

Females are themselves extremely sensible of the feeling of responsibility. . . . . It rests with them to create this *force moralisatrice* among the other sex; for it is their province to distribute praise and blame effectively. Why, then, do they not do so? because they are not sufficiently acquainted with the connexion between causes and effects in the moral world. . . . .

The science of morals is the science of all, but especially of the female sex, for they form the manners of a nation. . . . .

## XXI.

### SOLIDARITY.

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IF man were perfect, if he were infallible, society would present a very different harmony from that which is the subject of our inquiries. Ours is not the society of Fourier. It does not exclude evil; it admits dissonances; only we assert that it does not cease to be harmony if these dissonances pave the way to concord, and bring us back to it.

Our point of departure is that man is fallible, and that God has given him free will; and with the faculty of choosing, that of erring, of mistaking what is false for what is true, of sacrificing the future to the present, of giving way to unreasonable desires, etc. . . .

Man errs. But every act, every habit has its consequences.

By means of Responsibility, as we have seen, these consequences fall back on the author of the act. A natural concatenation of rewards or punishments, then, attracts him towards good, or repels him from evil.

Had man been destined to a solitary life, and to solitary labour, Responsibility would have been his only law.

But he is differently placed; he is sociable *by destination*. It is not true, as Rousseau has said, that man is naturally a *perfect and solitary whole*, and that the will of the lawgiver has transformed him into a fraction of a greater *whole*. The family, the province, the nation, the human race, are aggregates with which man has *necessary* relations. Hence it follows that the actions and the habits of the individual produce, besides the consequences which fall back upon himself, other good or bad consequences which extend themselves to his fellow-men. This is what we term the law of *Solidarity*, which is a sort of *collective Responsibility*.

This idea of Rousseau that the legislator has invented society—an idea false in itself—has been injurious in this respect, that it has led men to think that Solidarity is of legislative creation, and we

shall immediately see that modern legislators have based upon this doctrine their efforts to subject society to an *artificial solidarity*, acting in an inverse sense to *natural solidarity*. In everything, the principle of these great manipulators of the human race is to set up their own work in room of the work of God, which they disown.

Our first task is to prove undeniably the natural existence of the law of *Solidarity*.

In the eighteenth century, they did not believe in it. They adhered to the doctrine of the personality of faults. The philosophers of the last century, engaged above all in the reaction against Catholicism, would have feared, by admitting the principle of Solidarity, to open a door to the doctrine of *original sin*. Every time Voltaire found in the Scriptures a man bearing the punishment of another, he said ironically, "This is frightful, but the justice of God is not that of man."

We are not concerned here to discuss *original sin*. But what Voltaire laughed at is nevertheless a fact, which is not less incontestable than it is mysterious. The law of Solidarity makes its appearance so frequently and so strikingly, in the individual and in the masses, in details and in the aggregate, in particular and in general facts, that to fail to recognise it implies either the blindness of sectarianism or the zeal of imbittered controversy.

The first rule of all human justice is to concentrate the punishment of an action on its author, in virtue of the principle that faults are personal. But this law, sacred as regards individuals, is not the law of God, or even the law of society.

Why is this man rich? Because his father was active, honest, industrious, and economical. The father practised virtue; the son reaps the rewards.

Why is this other man always suffering, sick, feeble, timorous, and wretched? Because his father, endowed with a powerful constitution, abused it by debauchery and excess. To the guilty fall the agreeable consequences of vice, to the innocent fall its fatal consequences.

There exists not a man upon this earth whose condition has not been determined by thousands of millions of facts in which his own determinations have had no part. What I complain of to-day was perhaps caused by the caprice of my great-grandfather, etc.

Solidarity manifests itself on a greater scale still, and at distances which are still more inexplicable, when we consider the relations of divers nations, or of different generations of the same people.

Is it not strange that the eighteenth century was so occupied with intellectual or material works of which we are now enjoying the benefit? Is it not marvellous that we ourselves should make such efforts to cover the country with railways, on which none of us perhaps will ever travel? Who can fail to recognise the profound influence of our old revolutions on the events of our own time? Who can foresee what an inheritance of peace or of discord our present discussions may bequeath to our children?

Look at the public loans. We make war,—we obey savage passions,—we throw away by these means valuable power; and we find means of laying the scourge of all this destruction on our children, who may haply hold war in abhorrence, and be unable to understand our passions and hatreds.

Cast your eyes upon Europe; contemplate the events which agitate France, Germany, Italy, and Poland, and say if the law of *Solidarity* is a chimerical law.

There is no need to carry this enumeration farther. In order to prove undeniably the existence of the law, it is enough that the action of one man, of one people, of one generation, exerts a certain influence upon another man, another people, or another generation. Society at large is only an aggregate of solidarities which cross and overlap one another. This results from the communicable nature of human intelligence. Conversation, literature, discoveries, sciences, morals, etc., are all examples of this. All these unperceived currents by which one mind corresponds with another, all these efforts without visible connexion, the resulting force of which nevertheless pushes on the human race towards an equilibrium, towards an average level which is always rising—all that vast treasury of utilities and of acquired knowledge, which each may draw upon without diminishing it, or augment without being aware of it,—all this interchange of thoughts, of productions, of services, and of labour, of good and evil, of virtue and vice, which makes the human family one grand whole, and imparts to thousands of millions of ephemeral existences a common, a universal, a continuous life,—all this is *Solidarity*.

Naturally, then, and to a certain extent, there is an incontestable Solidarity among men. In other words, Responsibility is not exclusively personal, but is shared and divided. Action ema-

nates from individuality; consequences are spread over the community.

We must remark that it is in the nature of every man *to desire to be happy*. You may say that I am extolling egotism if you will; I extol nothing; I show, I prove undeniably, the existence of an innate universal sentiment, which can never cease to exist,—personal interest, the desire for happiness, and the repugnance to pain.

Hence it follows that the individual is led so to order his conduct that the good consequences of his actions accrue to himself, while the bad effects fall upon others. He endeavours to spread these bad consequences over the greatest possible number of men, in order that they may be less perceived, and call forth less reaction.

But opinion, *that mistress of the world*, the daughter of solidarity, brings together all those scattered grievances, and collects all aggrieved interests into a formidable resisting mass. When a man's habits become injurious to those who live around him, they call forth a feeling of repulsion. We judge such habits severely. We denounce them, we brand them; and the man who gives himself up to them becomes an object of distrust, of contempt, and of abhorrence. If he reap some advantages, they are soon far more than compensated by the sufferings which public aversion accumulates on his head. To the troublesome consequences which a bad habit always entails in virtue of the law of *Responsibility*, there come to be added other consequences still more grievous in virtue of the law of *Solidarity*.

Our contempt for the man soon extends to the habit, to the vice; and as the want of consideration is one of our most powerful springs of action, it is clear that solidarity, by the reaction which it brings to bear against vicious acts, tends to restrain and to prevent them.

Solidarity, then, like Responsibility, is a *progressive force*; and we see that, in relation to the author of the act, it resolves itself, if I may so speak, into *repercussive or reflected responsibility*; that it is still a system of reciprocal rewards and punishments, admirably fitted to circumscribe evil, to extend good, and to urge on mankind on the road of progress.

But in order that it should operate in this way,—in order that those who benefit or suffer from an action which is not their own should react upon its author by approbation or disapprobation, by gratitude or resistance, by esteem, affection, praise, or blame,

hatred or vengeance,—one condition is indispensable; and that condition is, that the connecting link between the act and all its effects should be known and appreciated.

When the public is mistaken in this respect, the law fails in its design.

An act is hurtful to the masses; but the masses are convinced that this act is advantageous to them. What is the consequence? The consequence is, that instead of reacting against it, in place of condemning it, and by that means restraining it, the public exalt it, honour it, extol it, and repeat it.

Nothing is more frequent, and here is the reason of it:

An act produces on the masses not only an effect, but a series of effects. Now it frequently happens that the primary effect is a local good, visible and tangible, whilst the ulterior effects set a-filtering through the body politic evils which are difficult to discover or to connect with their cause.

War is an example of this. In the infancy of society, we do not perceive all the consequences of war. And, to say truth, in a state of civilisation in which there is a less amount of anterior labour (capital) exposed to destruction, less science and money devoted to the machinery of war, etc., these consequences are less prejudicial than they afterwards become. We see only the first campaign, the booty which follows victory, the intoxication of triumph. At that stage, war and warriors are very popular. Then we see the enemy, having become conqueror in his turn, burning down houses and harvests, levying contributions, and imposing laws. In these alternations of success and misfortune, we see generations of men annihilated, agriculture crushed, and two nations impoverished. We see the most important portion of the people contemning the arts of peace, turning their arms against the institutions of their country, serving as the tools of despotism, employing their restless energy in sedition and civil discord, and creating barbarism and solitude at home, as they had formerly done among their neighbours. Do we then pronounce war to be plunder upon a great scale? . . . No; we see its effects without desiring to understand its cause; and when this people, in a state of decadence, shall be invaded in its turn by a swarm of conquerors, centuries after the catastrophe, grave historians will relate that the nation fell because the people had become enervated by peace, because they had forgotten the art of war and the austere virtues of their ancestors.

I could point out the same illusions in connexion with the system of slavery. . . .

The same thing is true of religious errors. . . .

In our own day, the *régime* of prohibition gives rise to the same fallacy. . . .

To bring back public opinion, by the diffusion of knowledge and the profound appreciation of causes and effects, into that intelligent state in which bad tendencies come to be branded, and prejudicial measures opposed, is to render a great service to one's country. When public opinion, deceived and misled, honours what is worthy of contempt, contemns what is honourable, punishes virtue and rewards vice, encourages what is hurtful and discourages what is useful, applauds a lie and smothers truth under indifference or insult, a nation turns its back upon progress, and can only be reclaimed by terrible lessons and catastrophes.

We have indicated elsewhere the gross misuse which certain Socialist schools have made of the word Solidarity. . . .

Let us now see in what spirit human laws should be framed.

It seems to me that here there can be no room for doubt. Human law should coincide with the natural law. It should facilitate and ensure the just retribution of men's acts; in other words, it should circumscribe solidarity, and organize reaction in order to enforce responsibility. The law can have no other object than to restrain vicious actions and to multiply virtuous ones, and for that purpose it should favour the just distribution of rewards and punishments, so that the bad effects of an act should be concentrated as much as possible on the person who commits it. . . .

In acting thus, the law conforms itself to the nature of things; solidarity induces a reaction against a vicious act, and the law only regulates that reaction. . . .

The law thus contributes to progress: The more rapidly it brings back the bad effect of the act upon the agent, the more surely it restrains the act itself.

To give an example: Violence is attended with pernicious consequences. Among savages the repression of violence is left to the natural course of things; and what happens? It provokes a terrible reaction. When a man has committed an act of violence against another man, an inextinguishable desire of vengeance is lighted up in the family of the injured party, and is transmitted



from generation to generation. The law interferes; and what ought it to do? Should it limit itself to stifle the desire for vengeance, to repress it, to punish it? It is clear that this would be to encourage violence, by sheltering it from reprisals. This is not, then, what the law should do. It ought to substitute itself, so to speak, for the spirit of vengeance, by organizing in its place a reaction against the violence. It should say to the injured family, "I charge myself with the repression of the act you complain of." When the whole tribe considers itself as injured and menaced, the law inquires into the grievance, interrogates the guilty party, makes sure that there is no error as to the fact and as to the person, and thus represses with regularity and certainty an act which would have been punished irregularly.\* . . .

\* This sketch terminates here abruptly; the *economic* view of the law of solidarity is not indicated. We may refer the reader to Part I., chapter x., and *ante*, chapter xi.

Moreover, the whole scope of this work on the Harmonies, the concordance of interests, and the grand maxims, "The prosperity of each is the prosperity of all—the prosperity of all is the prosperity of each," etc., the accord between property and community, the services of capital, extension of the domain of the gratuitous, etc., are all developments in a utilitarian point of view of the very title of this chapter,—Solidarity.—NOTE OF THE EDITOR.

## XXII.

### SOCIAL MOTIVE FORCE.

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It belongs to no human science to assign the ultimate reason of things.

Man suffers; society suffers. We ask why? This is to ask why God has been pleased to indue man with sensibility and free will. As regards this, no one knows more than the revelation in which he has faith has taught him.

But whatever may have been the designs of God, what human science can take as its point of departure is a positive fact, namely, that man has been created *free* and indued with *feeling*.

This is so true that I defy those who are astonished at it to conceive a living, thinking, acting being, indued with volition and affections—such a being, in short, as man—yet destitute of sensibility and free will.

Could God have ordered things otherwise? Reason undoubtedly answers *yes*, but imagination says eternally *no*, so radically impossible is it for us to separate in thought humanity from this double attribute. Now, to be indued with *feeling* is to be capable of experiencing sensations which are agreeable or painful. Hence comfort or uneasiness. From the moment, then, that God gave existence to sensibility, He permitted evil, or the possibility of evil.

In giving us free will, He has indued us with the faculty, at least in a certain measure, of shunning evil and seeking after good. Free will supposes and accompanies intelligence—what would the faculty of choosing signify if it were not allied with the faculty of examining, of comparing, of judging? Thus, every man who comes into the world brings with him *mind* and a *motive force*.

The motive force is that personal irresistible impulse, the essence of all our forces, which leads us to shun Evil and seek after Good. We term it the instinct of preservation, personal or private interest.

This sentiment has been sometimes decried, sometimes misun-

derstood, but as regards its existence there can be no doubt. Irresistibly we seek after all which, according to our notions, can ameliorate our destiny, and we avoid all which is likely to deteriorate it. This is at least as certain as it is that every material molecule possesses centripetal and centrifugal force. And just as the double movement of attraction and repulsion is the grand spring of the physical world, we may affirm that the double force of human attraction towards happiness and human repulsion from pain is the mainspring of the social mechanism.

But it is not enough that man is irresistibly led to prefer good to evil; he must also be able to discern what is good and what is evil. This is what God has provided for in giving him that marvellous and complex mechanism called intelligence. To fix his attention, to compare, judge, reason, connect effects with causes, to remember, to foresee; such are—if I may use the expression—the wheels of that admirable machine.

The impulsive force which is possessed by each of us moves under the direction of our intelligence. But our intelligence is imperfect. It is liable to error. We compare, we judge, we act in consequence; but we may err, we may make a bad choice, we may tend towards evil, mistaking it for good, or we may shun good, mistaking it for evil. This is the first source of social *dissonances*; and it is inevitable, for this reason, that the great motive spring of humanity—personal interest—is not, like material attraction, a blind force, but a force guided by an imperfect intelligence. Let us be very sure, then, that we shall not see Harmony except under this restriction. God has not seen proper to found social order or Harmony upon perfection, but upon human perfectibility, our capacity for improvement. If our intelligence is imperfect, it is improvable. It develops, enlarges, and rectifies itself. It begins of new and verifies its operations. Experience at each moment puts us right, and Responsibility suspends over our heads a complete system of punishments and rewards. Every step that we take on the road of error plunges us into increased suffering, and in such a way that the warning cannot fail to be heard, and the rectification of our determinations, and consequently of our actions, follows, sooner or later, with infallible certainty.

Under the impulse which urges him on, ardent to pursue happiness, prompt to seize it, man may be seeking his own good in the misery of others. This is a second and an abundant source of discordant social combinations. But the limit of such disturbances is

marked ; and they find their inevitable doom in the law of Solidarity. Individual force thus misapplied calls forth opposition from all the analogous forces, which, antagonistic to evil by their nature, repel injustice and chastise it.

It is thus that progress is realized, and it is not the less progress from being dearly bought. It springs from a native impulse, which is universal, and inherent in our nature, directed by an intelligence which is frequently misled, and subjected to a will which is frequently depraved. Arrested on its march by Error and Injustice, it receives the all-powerful assistance of Responsibility and Solidarity to enable it to surmount these obstacles, and it cannot fail to receive that assistance since it springs from these obstacles themselves.

This internal, universal, and imperishable motive power, which resides in each individual and constitutes him an active being, this tendency of every man to pursue happiness and shun misery, this product, this effect, this necessary complement of sensibility, without which sensibility would be only an inexplicable scourge, this primordial phenomenon which is at the bottom of all human actions, this attractive and repulsive force which we have denominated the mainspring of the social mechanism, has had for detractors the greater part of our publicists ; and this is one of the strangest aberrations which the annals of science present.

It is true that self-interest is the cause of all the evils, as it is of all the good, incident to man. It cannot fail to be so, since it determines all our acts. Seeing this, some publicists can imagine no better means of eradicating evil than by stifling *self-interest*. But as by this means they would destroy the very spring and motive of our activity, they have thought proper to endow us with a different motive force, namely, *devotion, self-sacrifice*. They hope that henceforth all transactions and social combinations will take place at their bidding, upon the principle of self-abandonment. We are no longer to pursue our own happiness, but the happiness of others ; the warnings of sensibility are to go for nothing, like the rewards and punishments of Responsibility. All the laws of our nature are to be reversed ; the spirit of sacrifice is to be substituted for the instinct of preservation ; in a word, no one is to think longer on his own personality, but for the purpose of hastening to sacrifice it to the public good. It is from such a universal transformation of the human heart that certain publicists, who think themselves very religious, expect to realize perfect social harmony. They have for-

gotten to tell us how they hope to effect this indispensable preliminary, the transformation of the human heart.

If they are foolish enough to undertake this, they will find that they want the power to accomplish it. Do they desire the proof of what I say? Let them try the experiment on themselves; let them endeavour to stifle in their own hearts all feeling of self-interest, so that it shall no longer make its appearance in the most ordinary actions of life. They will not be long in finding out their powerlessness. Why, then, pretend to impose upon all men, without exception, a doctrine to which they themselves cannot submit?

I confess myself unable to see anything religious, unless it be in intention and appearance, in these affected theories, in these impracticable maxims which they affect so earnestly to preach, while they continue to act just as the vulgar act. Is it, I would ask, true and genuine religion which inspires these catholic economists with the presumptuous thought that God has done His work ill, and that it is their mission to repair it? Bossuet did not think so when he said, "Man aspires to happiness, and he cannot help aspiring to it."

Declamations against personal interest never can have much scientific significance; for self-interest is part of man's indestructible nature—at least, we cannot destroy it without destroying man himself. All that religion, morals, and political economy can do is to give an enlightened direction to this impulsive force—to point out not only the primary, but the ulterior consequences of those acts to which it urges us. A superior and progressive satisfaction consequent on a transient suffering, long continued and constantly increased suffering following on a momentary gratification; such after all are moral good and evil. That which determines the choice of men towards virtue is an elevated and enlightened interest, but it is always primarily a personal interest.

If it is strange that personal interest should be decried, when considered not with reference to its immoral abuse, but as the providential moving spring of all human activity, it is still stranger that it should have been put aside altogether, and that men should have imagined themselves in a situation to frame a system of social science without taking it into account.

It is an inexplicable instance of folly that publicists in general should regard themselves as the depositaries and the arbiters of this motive spring. Each starts from this point of departure. Assuming that mankind are a flock, and that I am the shepherd, how am I to manage in order to make mankind happy? Or this:

Given on the one hand a certain quantity of clay, and on the other a potter, what should the potter do in order to turn that clay to the best account?

Our publicists may differ when the question comes to be which is the best potter, who forms and moulds the clay most advantageously? but they are all at one upon this, that their function is to knead the human clay, and what the clay has to do is simply to be kneaded by them. Under the title of legislators, they establish between themselves and the human race relations analagous to those of guardian and ward. The idea never occurs to them that the human race is a living sentient body, indued with volition, and acting according to laws which it is not their business to invent, since they already exist, nor to impose, but to study; that humanity is an aggregate of beings in all respects like themselves, and in no way inferior or subordinate; endowed both with an impulse to act, and with intelligence to choose; which feels on all sides the stimulus of Responsibility and Solidarity; and that, in short, from all these phenomena there results an aggregate of self-existing relations, which it is not the business of science to create, as they imagine, but to observe.

Rousseau, I think, is the publicist who has most naïvely exhumed from antiquity this omnipotence of the resuscitated legislator of the Greeks. Convinced that the social order is a human invention, he compares it to a machine; men are the wheels of that machine, the ruler sets it in motion; the lawgiver invents it, under the impulse given him by the publicist, who thus finds himself definitively the mainspring and regulator of the human species. This is the reason why the publicist never fails to address himself to the legislator in the imperative style; he decrees him to decree: "Found your society upon such or such a principle; give it good manners and customs; bend it to the yoke of religion; direct its aims and energies towards arms, or commerce, or agriculture, or virtue," etc. Others more modest speak in this way: "Idlers will not be tolerated in the republic; you will distribute the population conveniently between the towns and the country; you will take order that there shall be neither rich nor poor," etc.

These formulas attest the unmeasured presumption of those who employ them. They imply a doctrine which does not leave one atom of dignity to the human race.

I know not whether they are more false in theory or pernicious in practice. In both views, they lead to deplorable results.

They would lead us to believe that the social economy is an artificial arrangement coined in the brain of an inventor. Hence every publicist constitutes himself an inventor. His greatest desire is to find acceptance for his mechanism; his greatest care is to create abhorrence of all others, and principally of that which springs spontaneously from the organization of man and from the nature of things. The books conceived and written on this plan are, and can only be, prolix declamations against Society.

This false science does not study the concatenation of effects and causes. It does not inquire into the good and evil produced by men's actions, and trust afterwards to the motive force of Society in choosing the road it is to follow. No; it enjoins, it constrains, it imposes, or, if it cannot do that, it counsels; like a natural philosopher who should say to the stone, "Thou art not supported; I order thee to fall, or at least I advise it." It is upon this footing that M. Droz has said that "the design of political economy is to render easy circumstances as general as possible,"—a definition which has been welcomed with great favour by the Socialists, because it opens a door to every Utopia, and leads to artificial regulation. What should we say if M. Arago were to open his course in this way, "The object of astronomy is to render gravitation as general as possible"? It is true that men are animated beings, indued with volition, and acting under the influence of free will. But there also resides in them an internal force, a sort of gravitation: and the question is to know towards what they gravitate. If it be fatally, inevitably, towards evil, there is no remedy, and assuredly the remedy will not come to us from a publicist subject like other men to the common tendency. If it be towards good, here we have the motive force already found; science has no need to substitute for it constraint or advice. Its part is to enlighten our free will, to display effects as flowing from causes, well assured that, under the influence of truth, "ease and material prosperity tend to become as general as possible."

Practically, the doctrine which would place the motive force of society, not in mankind at large, nor in their peculiar organization, but in legislators and governments, is attended with consequences still more deplorable. It tends to draw down upon Governments a crushing responsibility, from which they never recover. If there are sufferings, it is the fault of Government; if there are poor, it is the fault of Government. Is not Government the prime mover? If the mainspring is bad or inoperative, break it, and choose

another. Or else they lay the blame on science itself; and in our days we have it repeated *ad nauseam* that "all social sufferings are imputable to political economy."\* Why not, when Political Economy presents herself as having for design to realize the happiness of men without their co-operation? When such notions prevail, the last thing men take it into their heads to do is to turn their regards upon themselves, and inquire whether the true cause of their sufferings is not their own ignorance and injustice; their ignorance which brings them under the discipline of Responsibility, and their injustice which draws down upon them the reaction of Solidarity. How should mankind ever dream of seeking in their errors the cause of their sufferings when the human race is persuaded that it is inert by nature, and that the principle of all activity, consequently of all responsibility, is external, and resides in the will of the lawgiver and the governing power?

Were I called upon to mark the feature which distinguishes Socialism from Political Economy, I should find it here. Socialism boasts of a vast number of sects. Each sect has its Utopia, and so far are they from any mutual understanding, that they declare against each other war to the knife. The *atelier social organisé* of M. Blanc, and the *an-archie* of M. Proudhon,—the *association* of Fourier, and the *communisme* of M. Cabet,—are as different from each other as night is from day. Why do these sectarian leaders, then, range themselves under the common denomination of *Socialists*, and what is the bond which unites them against natural or providential society? They have no other bond than this, *they all repudiate natural society*. What they wish is an artificial society springing ready made from the brain of the inventor. No doubt, each of them wishes to be the Jupiter of this Minerva—no doubt each of them hugs his own contrivance, and dreams of his own social order. But they have this in common, that they recognise in humanity neither the motive force, which urges mankind on to good, nor the *curative* force, which delivers them from evil. They fight among themselves as to what form they are to mould the human clay into, but they are all agreed that humanity is clay to be moulded. Humanify is not in their eyes a living harmonious being, that God

\* "Poverty is the fruit of Political Economy. . . . Political Economy requires death to come to its aid; . . . it is the theory of instability and theft."—PROUDHON, *Contradictions Économiques*, t. xi. p. 214. "If the people want bread, . . . it is the fault of Political Economy."—*Ibid.*



himself has provided with progressive and self-sustaining forces, but rather a mass of inert matter which has been waiting for them to impart to it sentiment and life ; it is not a subject to be studied, but a subject to be experimented on.

Political Economy, on the other hand, after having clearly shown that there are in each man forces of impulse and repulsion, the aggregate of which constitutes the social impellent, and after being convinced that this motive force tends towards good, never dreams of annihilating it in order to substitute another of its own creation, but studies the varied and complicated social phenomena to which it gives birth.

Is this to say that Political Economy is as much a stranger to social progress, as astronomy is to the motion of the heavenly bodies ? Certainly not. Political Economy has to do with beings which are intelligent and free,—and, as such, let us never forget, subject to error. Their tendency is towards good ; but they may err. Science, then, interferes usefully, not to create causes and effects, not to change the tendencies of man, not to subject him to organizations, to injunctions, or even to advice, but to point out to him the good and the evil which result from his determinations.

Political Economy is thus quite a science of observation and exposition. She does not say to men, “I enjoin you, I counsel you, not to go too near the fire ;” she does not say, “I have invented a social organization ; the gods have taught me institutions which will keep you at a respectful distance from the fire.” No, Political Economy only shows men clearly that fire will burn them, proclaims it, proves it, and does the same thing as regards all other social or moral phenomena, convinced that this is enough. The repugnance to die by fire is considered as a primordial pre-existent fact, which Political Economy has not created, and which she cannot alter or change.

Economists cannot be always at one ; but it is easy to see that their differences are quite of another kind from those which divide the Socialists. Two men who devote their whole attention to observe one and the same phenomenon and its effects—rent, for example, exchange, competition—may not arrive at the same conclusion, and this proves nothing more than that one of the two has observed the phenomenon inaccurately or imperfectly. It is an operation to be repeated. With the aid of other observers, the probability is that truth in the end will be discovered. It is for this reason, that if each economist were, like

each astronomer, to make himself fully acquainted with what his predecessors have done, as far as they have gone, the science would be progressive, and for that reason more and more useful, rectifying constantly observations inaccurately made, and adding indefinitely new observations to those which had been made before.

But the Socialists,—each pursuing his own road, and coining artificial combinations in the mint of his own brain,—may pursue their inquiries in this way to all eternity without coming to any common understanding, and without the labours of one aiding to any extent the labours of another. Say profited by the labours of Adam Smith; Rossi by those of Say; Blanqui and Joseph Garnier by those of all their predecessors. But Plato, Sir Thomas More, Harrington, Fénelon, Fourier, might amuse themselves with organizing according to their own fancy a Republic, an Utopia, an Oceana, a Salente, a Phalanstère, and no one would ever discover the slightest affinity between their chimerical creations. These dreamers spin all out of their own imaginations, men as well as things. They invent a social order without respect to the human heart, and then they invent a human heart to suit their social order. . . . .

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## XXIII.

### EXISTENCE OF EVIL.

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IN these last days science has retrograded and been driven back. It has been bent and twisted under the obligation imposed upon it, if I may so speak, of denying the existence of Evil under pain of being convicted of denying the existence of God.

Writers whose business it is to display exquisite sensibility, unbounded philanthropy, and unrivalled devotion to religion, have got into the way of saying, "Evil cannot enter into the providential plan. Suffering is no ordinance of God and nature, but comes from human institutions."

As this doctrine falls in with the passions that they desire to cherish, it soon becomes popular. Books and journals have been filled with declamations against society. Science is no longer permitted to study facts impartially. Whoever dares to warn men that a certain vice, a certain habit, leads necessarily to certain hurtful consequences, is marked down as a man destitute of human feelings, without religion, an Atheist, a Malthusian, an Economist.

Socialism has carried its folly so far as to announce the termination of all social suffering, but not of all individual suffering. It has not ventured to predict that a day will come when man will no longer suffer, grow old, and die.

Now, I would ask, is it easier to reconcile with the infinite goodness of God, evil which assails individually every man who comes into the world, than evil which is extended over society at large? And then is it not a contradiction so transparent as to be puerile, to deny the existence of suffering in the masses, when we admit its existence in individuals?

Man suffers, and will always suffer. Society, then, also suffers, and will always suffer. Those who address mankind should have the courage to tell them this. Humanity is not a fine lady, with delicate nerves, and an irritable temperament, from whom we

must conceal the coming storm, more especially when to foresee it is the only way to ensure our getting out of it safely. In this respect, all the books with which France has been inundated, from Sismondi and Buret downwards, appear to me to be wanting in virility. Their authors dare not tell the truth ; nay, they dare not investigate it, for fear of discovering that absolute poverty is the necessary starting-point of the human race, and that, consequently, so far are we from being in a position to attribute that poverty to the social order, it is to the social order that we must attribute all the triumphs which we have already achieved over our original destitution. But, then, after such an avowal, they could no longer constitute themselves tribunes of the people, and the avengers of the masses oppressed by civilisation.

After all, science merely establishes, combines, and deduces facts ; she does not create them ; she does not produce them, nor is she responsible for them. Is it not strange that men should have gone the length of announcing and disseminating the paradox, that if mankind suffer, their sufferings are due to Political Economy ? Thus, after being blamed for investigating the sufferings of society, Political Economy is accused of engendering those sufferings by that same investigation.

I assert that science can do nothing more than observe and establish facts. Prove to us that humanity, instead of being progressive, is retrograde ; and that inevitable and insurmountable laws urge mankind on to irremediable deterioration. Show us that the law of Malthus and that of Ricardo are true in their worst and most pernicious sense, and that it is impossible to deny the tyranny of capital, or the incompatibility between machinery and labour, or any of the other contradictory alternatives in which Châteaubriand and Tocqueville have placed the human race ; then I maintain that science ought to proclaim this, and proclaim it aloud.

Why should we shut our eyes to a gulf which is gaping before us ? Do we require the naturalist or the physiologist to reason upon individual man, on the assumption that his organs are exempt from pain or not liable to destruction ? *Pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris* ; such is the declaration of anatomical science backed by universal experience. No doubt, this is a hard truth for us to receive—not less hard than the contested propositions of Malthus and Ricardo. But are we for this reason to spare the delicate sensibility which has sprung up all at once among our modern

publicists, and has given existence to Socialism? Is medical science, for the same reason, to affirm audaciously that we are constantly renewing our youth and are immortal? Or, if medical science refuse to stoop to such juggling, are we to foam at the mouth, and cry out, as has been done in the case of the social sciences—"Medical science admits the existence of pain and death; it is misanthropical; it is cruel; it accuses God of being malevolent or powerless; it is impious; it is atheistical; nay, more, it creates the evil the existence of which it refuses to deny"?

I have never doubted that the Socialist schools have led away many generous hearts and earnest minds, and I have no wish to humiliate any one. But the general character of Socialism is very whimsical, and I cannot help asking myself how long such a tissue of puerilities can continue in vogue.

In Socialism all is affectation.

It affects scientific forms and scientific language, and we have seen what sort of science it teaches.

In its writings, it affects a delicacy of nerve so feminine as to be unable to listen to a tale of social sufferings; and whilst it has introduced into literature this insipid and mawkish sensibility, it has established in the arts a taste for the trivial and the horrible; in ordinary life, a sort of scarecrow fashion in dress, appearance, and deportment—the long beard, the grim and sullen countenance, the vulgar airs of a village Titan or Prometheus. In politics (where such puerilities are less innocent), Socialism has introduced the doctrine of energetic means of *transition*, the violence of revolutionary practices, life and material interests sacrificed *en masse* to what is ideal and chimerical. But what Socialism affects, above all, is a certain show and appearance of religion! This is only one of the Socialist tactics, it is true—such tactics are always disgraceful to a school when they lead to hypocrisy.

These Socialists are perpetually talking to us of Christ; but I would ask them, how it is that while they acknowledge that Christ, the innocent *par excellence*, prayed in His agony that "the cup might pass from Him," adding, "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done," they should think it strange that mankind at large should be called upon to exercise resignation also.

No doubt, had God willed it, He might have so arranged His almighty plans that just as the individual advances towards inevitable death, the human race might have advanced towards inevitable destruction. In that case, we should have had no choice but to

submit, and science, whether she liked it or not, must have admitted the sombre social *dénodment*, just as she now admits the melancholy individual *dénodment*.

But happily it is not so.

There is redemption for man, and for humanity.

The one is indued with an immortal soul ; the other with indefinite perfectibility. . . . .

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## XXIV.

### PERFECTIBILITY.

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THAT the human race is perfectible ; that it progresses towards a higher and higher level ; that its wealth is increasing and becoming more equalized ; that its ideas are being enlarged and purified ; that its errors, and the oppressions which these errors support, are disappearing ; that its knowledge shines with brighter and brighter effulgence ; that its morality is improving ; that it is learning, by reason or by experience, in the domain of responsibility, the art of earning a constantly larger amount of recompense, and a constantly smaller amount of chastisement ; that, consequently, evil is continually lessening, and good continually increasing ;—these are conclusions which it is impossible to doubt when we scrutinize the nature of man and that intelligent principle, which is his essence, which was breathed into him with the breath of life, and warrants the scriptural declaration that man is made in the image of God.

We know too well that man is not a perfect being. Were he perfect, he would not reflect a vague resemblance of God ; he would be God himself. He is imperfect, then,—subject to error and to suffering,—but, on the other hand, were he stationary, what title could he have to claim the unspeakable privilege of bearing in him self the image of a perfect being ?

Moreover, if intelligence, which is the faculty of comparing, of judging, of rectifying errors, of learning, does not constitute individual perfectibility, what can constitute it ?

And if the union of all individual perfectibilities, especially among beings capable of communicating to each other their acquisitions, does not afford a guarantee for collective perfectibility, we must renounce all philosophy and all moral and political science.

What constitutes man's perfectibility is his intelligence, or the faculty which has been given to him of passing from error, which

is the parent of evil, to truth, which is the generating principle of good.

It is science and experience which cause man to abandon, in his mind, error for truth, and afterwards, in his conduct, evil for good ; it is the discovery which he makes, in phenomena and in acts, of effects which he had not suspected.

But to enable him to acquire this science, he must have an interest in acquiring it. In order that he should profit by this experience, he must have an interest in profiting by it. It is in the law of responsibility, then, that we must search for the means of realizing human perfectibility.

And as we can form no idea of responsibility apart from liberty ; as acts which are not voluntary can afford neither instruction nor available experience ; as beings capable of being improved or deteriorated by the exclusive action of external causes without the participation of choice, reflection, or free will (although this happens in the case of unconscious organized matter), could not be called perfectible, in the moral acceptation of the word, we must conclude that liberty is the very essence of progress. To impair man's liberty is not only to hurt and degrade him ; it is to change his nature ; it is (in the measure and proportion in which such oppression is exercised) to render him incapable of improvement ; it is to despoil him of his resemblance to the Creator ; it is to dim and deaden in his noble nature that vital spark which glowed there from the beginning.

But in thus proclaiming aloud our fixed and unalterable belief in human perfectibility, and in progress, which is necessary in every sense, and which, by a marvellous correspondence, is as much more active in one direction as it is more active in all others, we must not be regarded as indulging in Utopianism, or be considered as optimists, believing "all to be for the best, in the best of worlds," and expecting the immediate arrival of the millennium.

Alas ! when we turn our regards on the world as it is, and see around us the enormous amount of mud and meanness, suffering and complaint, vice and crime, which still exist,—when we reflect on the moral action exerted on society by the classes who ought to point out to the lagging multitude the way to the New Jerusalem, —when we ask ourselves what use the rich make of their fortune, the poets of their genius, philosophers of their scientific lucubrations, journalists of the ministry with which they are invested, high functionaries, ministers of state, representatives of the people, kings, of



the power which fate has placed in their hands,—when we witness revolutions like that which has recently agitated Europe, and in which each man seems to be in search of what must in the long-run prove fatal to himself and to society at large,—when we see cupidity in all shapes and among all ranks, the constant sacrifice of the interests of others to our own selfish interest, and of the future to the present,—when we see that great and inevitable moving spring of the human race, personal interest, still making its appearance only in manifestations the most material and the most improvident,—when we see the working classes, preyed upon by the parasitism of public functionaries, rise up in revolutionary convulsions, not against this withering parasitism, but against wealth legitimately acquired, that is to say, against the very element of their own deliverance and the principle of their own right and force,—when such spectacles present themselves to us on all sides, we get afraid of ourselves, we tremble for our faith in human perfectibility, the light would seem to waver, and be on the eve of extinction, leaving us in the fearful darkness of Pessimism.

But no—there is no ground for despair. Whatever be the impressions which too recent circumstances have made upon us, humanity still moves onward. What causes the illusion is that we measure the life of nations by the short span of our own individual lives; and because a few years are a long period for us, we imagine them also a long period for them. But even adopting this inadequate measure, the progress of society on all sides is visible. I need scarcely remind you of the marvels which have already been accomplished in what concerns material advantages, the improved salubrity of towns, and in the means of locomotion and communication, etc.

In a political point of view, has the French nation gained no experience? Who dares affirm that had all the difficulties through which we have just passed presented themselves half a century ago, or sooner, France would have overcome them with as much ability, prudence, and wisdom, and with so few sacrifices? I write these lines in a country which has been fertile in revolutions. Florence used to have a rising every five years, and at each rising one half of her citizens robbed and murdered the other half. Had we only a little more imagination—not that which creates, invents, and assumes facts, but that which recalls them and brings them to mind—we should be more just to our times and to our contemporaries! What remains true, and it is a truth which no one can know bet-

ter than an Economist, is this, that human progress, especially in its dawn, is excessively slow, so very slow as to give rise to despair in the heart of the philanthropist. . . .

Men whose genius invests them with the power of the press ought, it seems to me, to regard things more nearly, before scattering amidst the social fermentation discouraging speculations which imply for humanity the alternative of two modes of degradation.

We have already seen some examples of this, when treating of population, of rent, of machinery, of the division of inheritance, etc.

Here is another, taken from M. de Châteaubriand, who merely formulates a fashionable conventionalism: "The corruption of morals and the civilisation of nations march abreast. If the last present means of liberty, the first is an inexhaustible source of slavery."

It is beyond doubt that civilisation presents means of liberty, and it is equally beyond doubt that corruption is a source of slavery. That which is doubtful, more than doubtful,—and what for my own part I deny solemnly and formally,—is this, that civilisation and corruption march abreast. If it were so, a fatal equilibrium would be established between *the means of liberty* and *the sources of slavery*; and immobility would be the fate of the human race.

There cannot, moreover, enter into the human heart a thought more melancholy, more discouraging, more desolating, a thought more fitted to urge us to despair, to irreligion, to impiety, to blasphemy, than this, that every human being, whether he wills it or not, whether he doubts it or not, proceeds on the road of civilisation—and civilisation is corruption!

Then, if all civilisation be corruption, wherein consist its advantages? It is impossible to pretend that civilisation is unattended with moral, intellectual, and material advantages, for then it would cease to be civilisation. As Châteaubriand employs the term, civilisation signifies material progress, an increase of population, of wealth, of prosperity, the development of intelligence, the advancement of the sciences; and all these steps of progress imply, according to him, a corresponding retrogression of the moral sense.

This were enough to tempt men to a wholesale suicide; for I repeat that material and intellectual progress is not of our preparation and ordination. God himself has decreed it, in giving us expansible desires and improvable faculties. We are urged on to it without wishing it, without knowing it,—Châteaubriand, and his

equals, if he has any, more than any one else. And this progress is to sink us deeper and deeper into immorality and slavery, by means of corruption ! . . . . .

I thought at first that Châteaubriand had let slip an unguarded phrase, as poets frequently do, without examining it too narrowly. With that class of writers, sound sometimes runs away with sense. Provided the antithesis is symmetrical, what matters it that the thought be false or objectionable ? Provided the metaphor produces its intended effect, that it has an air of inspiration and depth, that it secures the applause of the public, and enables the author to pass for an oracle, of what importance are exactitude and truth ?

I had thought, then, that Châteaubriand, giving way to a momentary excess of misanthropy, had allowed himself to formulate a conventionalism, a vulgarism dragged from the kennel. "Civilisation and corruption march abreast," is a phrase that has been repeated since the days of Heraclitus, but it is not more true on that account.

At a distance of several years, however, the same great writer has reproduced the same thought, and in a more didactic form ; which shows that it expressed his deliberate opinion. It is proper to combat it, not because it comes from Châteaubriand, but because it has got abroad, and so generally prevails.

"The material condition is ameliorated," he says, "intellectual progress advances, and nations, in place of profiting, decay. Here is the explanation of the decay of society and the growth of the individual. Had the moral sense been developed in proportion to the development of intelligence, there would have been a counter weight, and the human race would have grown greater without danger. But it is just the contrary which happens. The perception of good and evil is obscured in proportion as intelligence is enlightened ; conscience becomes narrowed in proportion as ideas are enlarged."—*Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, vol. xi.

## XXV.

### RELATIONS OF POLITICAL ECONOMY WITH MORALS, WITH POLITICS, WITH LEGISLATION.\*

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#### WITH RELIGION.

A PHENOMENON is always found placed between two other phenomena, one of which is its *efficient*, and the other its *final* cause ; and science has not done with that phenomenon as long as either of these relations remains undeveloped.

The human mind generally begins, I think, with the discovery of final causes, because they are more immediately interesting to us. No species of knowledge, besides, leads us with more force towards religious ideas, or is more fitted to make us feel in all the fibres of our heart a lively sense of gratitude for the inexhaustible goodness of God.

Habit, it is true, has so familiarized us with a great number of these *providential intentions*, that we enjoy them without thought. We see, and we hear, without thinking of the ingenious mechanism of the eye and of the ear. The sun, the dew, the rain, lavish upon us their useful effects, or their gentle sensations, without awakening our surprise or our gratitude. This is solely owing to the continued action upon us of these admirable phenomena. For let a final cause, although comparatively insignificant, come to be disclosed to us for the first time, let the botanist explain to us why this plant affects such or such a form, or why that other is clothed in such or such a colour, we immediately feel in our heart the unspeakable enchantment with which new proofs of the power, the goodness, and the wisdom of God never fail to penetrate us.

The region of final intentions, then, is for man's imagination as an atmosphere impregnated with religious ideas.

But after we have perceived, or had a glimpse of the phenome-

\* The author has unfortunately left nothing on the subject of these intended chapters, except an introduction to the chapter which follows.—EDITOR.

non in this aspect, we have still to study it in another relation, that is to say, to seek for its efficient cause.

It is strange, but it sometimes happens, that after having obtained the full knowledge of that cause, we find that it carries with it so necessarily the effect which we had admired at first, that we refuse to recognise in it longer the character of a final cause; and we say: "I was very simple to believe that God had provided such an arrangement with such a design; I see now that the cause which I have discovered being given (and it is inevitable), this arrangement must follow necessarily, apart from any pretended providential intention."

It is thus that defective and superficial science, with its scalpel and its analyses, comes sometimes to destroy in our souls the religious sentiment to which the simple aspect of nature had given rise.

This is the case frequently with the anatomist and the astronomer. What a strange thing it is, exclaims the ignorant man, that when an extraneous substance penetrates into a tissue, where its presence does great injury, an inflammation and a suppuration take place, which tend to expel it! No, says the anatomist, there is nothing intentional in that expulsion. It is a *necessary* effect of the suppuration; and the suppuration itself is a *necessary* effect of the presence of an extraneous substance in our tissues. If you wish it, I shall explain to you the mechanism, and you will acknowledge yourself that the effect follows the cause, but that the cause has not been arranged intentionally to produce that effect, since it is itself the necessary effect of an anterior cause.

How I admire, says the ignorant man, the foresight of God who has willed that the rain should not descend on the soil in a sheet, but should fall in drops, as if it came from the gardener's watering-pot! Were it not so, vegetation would be impossible. You throw away your admiration, answers the learned naturalist; the cloud is not a sheet of water; if it were, it could not be supported by the atmosphere. It is a collection of microscopic vesicles, or minute bladders like soap-bubbles. When their density increases, or when they burst by compression, these thousands of millions of infinitesimal drops fall, growing larger in their descent by the vapour of the water which they precipitate, etc. If vegetation is benefited in consequence, it is by accident; but we must not think that the Creator amuses himself in sending us down water through the sieve of a monster watering-pot.

Ignorance, we must confess, very often imparts a certain plausibility to science, when the connexion of causes and effects is regarded in this way, by attributing a phenomenon to a final intention which does not exist, and which is dissipated before the light of superior knowledge.

Thus, in former days, before men had any knowledge of electricity, they were frightened by the noise of thunder, being able to recognise in that astounding voice, bellowing amid the storm, nothing less than a manifestation of Divine wrath. This is an association of ideas which, like many others, has disappeared before the progress of physical science. Man is so constituted, that when a phenomenon affects him, he searches for the cause of it; and if he finds out that cause, he gives it a name. Then he sets himself to find out the cause of that cause, and so he goes on until he can mount no higher, when he stops, and exclaims, "*It is God; it is the will of God.*" This is his *ultima ratio*. He is arrested, however, only for the moment. Science advances, and soon this second, third, or fourth cause, which had remained unperceived, is revealed to his eyes. Then science says, This effect is not due, as we believed, to the immediate will of God, but to that natural cause which I have just discovered. And man, after having taken possession of this discovery, after having gained this step in the region of science, finds himself, so to speak, one step farther removed from the region of Faith, and again asks, What is the cause of that cause? And not finding it, he persists in the ever-recurring explanation, "It is the will of God." And so he proceeds onwards for indefinite ages, through a countless succession of scientific revelations and exercises of faith.

This procedure on the part of mankind must appear to superficial minds to be destructive of every religious idea; for is the result of it not this, that as science advances, God recedes? Do we not see clearly that the domain of final intentions is narrowed in proportion as the domain of natural causes is enlarged?

Unhappy are they who give to this fine problem so narrow a solution. No, it is not true that as science advances, the idea of God recedes. On the contrary, what is true is that, as our intelligence increases, this idea is enlarged, and broadened, and elevated. When we discover a natural cause for what we had imagined an immediate, spontaneous, supernatural act of the Divine will, are we to conclude that that will is absent or indifferent? No, indeed; all that it proves is, that that will acts by processes different from

those which it had pleased us to imagine. All that it proves is, that the phenomenon which we regarded as an accident in creation occupies its place in the universal frame; and that everything, even the most special effects, have been foreseen from all eternity by the divine prescience. What! is the idea which we form of the power of God lessened when we come to see that each of the countless results which we discover, or which escape our investigations, not only has its natural cause, but is bound up in an infinite circle of causes; so that there is not a detail of movement, of force, of form, of life, which is not the product of the great whole, or which can be explained apart from that whole.

But why this dissertation, which is foreign, as it would seem, to the main object of our inquiries? The phenomena of the social economy have likewise their efficient cause, and their providential intention. In this department, as in natural science, as in anatomy, or in astronomy, men have frequently denied the final cause precisely because the efficient cause assumes the character of an absolute necessity.

The social world abounds in harmonies, of which we can form no adequate or complete conception until the mind has remounted to causes, in order to seek their explanation, and descended to effects, to discover the destination of the phenomena. . . .

## ADDENDUM.

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NOTE INTENDED BY THE AUTHOR AS AN ADDITION TO CHAPTER VI., ON  
*WEALTH*, PART I., p. 165.

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*Morality of Wealth.*—We have just been engaged in studying wealth in an Economical point of view; it may not perhaps be useless to say something here of its Moral effects.

In all ages, wealth, in a moral point of view, has been the subject of controversy. Certain philosophers and certain religionists have commanded us to despise it; others have greatly prided themselves on the golden mean, *aurea mediocritas*. Few, if any, have admitted as moral an ardent longing after the goods of fortune.

Which are right? Which are wrong? It does not belong to Political Economy to treat of individual morality. I shall make only one remark: I am always inclined to think that in matters which lie within the domain of everyday practice, theorists, savants, philosophers, are much less likely to be right than this universal practice itself, when we include in the meaning of the word practice, not only the actions of the generality of men, but their sentiments and ideas.

Now, what does universal practice demonstrate in this case? It shows us all men endeavouring to emerge from their original state of poverty,—all preferring the sensation of satisfaction to the sensation of want, riches to poverty; all, I should say, or almost all, without excepting even those who declaim against wealth.

The desire for wealth is ardent, incessant, universal, irrepressible. In almost every part of the globe, it has triumphed over our natural aversion to toil. Whatever may be said to the contrary, it displays a character of avidity still baser among savage than among civilized nations. All our navigators who left Europe in the eighteenth century, imbued with the fashionable ideas of Rousseau, and expecting to find the men of nature at the antipodes disinterested, generous, hospitable, were struck with the devouring rapacity of these primitive barbarians. Our military men can tell us, in our own day, what we are to think of the boasted disinterestedness of the Arab tribes.

On the other hand, the opinions of all men, even of those who do not act up to their opinions, concur in honouring disinterestedness, generosity, self-control, and in branding that ill-regulated, inordinate love of wealth which causes men not to shrink from any means of obtaining it. The same public opinion sur-



rounds with esteem the man who, in whatever rank of life, devotes his honest and persevering labour to ameliorating the lot and elevating the condition of his family. It is from this combination of facts, ideas, and sentiments, it would seem to me, that we must form our judgment on wealth in connexion with individual morality.

First of all, we must acknowledge that the motive which urges us to the acquisition of riches is of providential creation,—natural, and consequently *moral*. It has its source in that original and general destitution which would be our lot in everything, if it did not create in us the desire to free ourselves from it. We must acknowledge, in the second place, that the efforts which men make to emerge from their primitive destitution, provided they keep within the limits of justice, are estimable and respectable, seeing that they are universally esteemed and respected. No one, moreover, will deny that labour is in itself of a moral nature. This is expressed in the common proverb which we find in all countries,—Idleness is the parent of vice. And we should fall into a glaring contradiction were we to say, on the one hand, that labour is indispensable to the morality of men, and, on the other, that men are immoral when they seek to realize wealth by their labour.

We must acknowledge, in the third place, that the desire of wealth becomes immoral when it goes the length of inducing us to depart from the rules of justice, and that avarice becomes more unpopular in proportion to the wealth of those who addict themselves to that passion.

Such is the judgment pronounced, not by certain philosophers or sects, but by the generality of men; and I adopt it.

I must guard myself, however, by adding that this judgment may be different at the present day from what it was in ancient times, without involving a contradiction.

The Essenians and Stoics lived in a state of society where wealth was always the reward of oppression, of pillage, and of violence. Not only was it deemed immoral in itself, but, in consequence of the immoral means employed in its acquisition, it revealed the immorality of those who possessed it. A reaction, even an exaggerated reaction, against riches and rich men was to be expected. Modern philosophers who declaim against wealth without taking into account this difference in the means of acquiring wealth, believe themselves Senecas, while they are only parrots, repeating what they do not understand.

But the question which Political Economy proposes is this: Is wealth for mankind a moral good or a moral evil? Does the progressive development of wealth imply, in a moral point of view, improvement or decadence?

The reader anticipates my answer, and will understand that I must say a few words on the subject of individual morality, in order to get quit of the contradiction, or rather of the impossibility, which would be implied in asserting that what is individual immorality is general morality.

Without having recourse to statistics, or the records of our prisons, we must handle a problem which may be enunciated in these terms:—

Is man degraded by exercising more power over nature—by constraining nature to serve him—by obtaining additional leisure—by freeing himself from the more imperious and pressing wants of his organization—by being enabled to rouse from sleep and inactivity his intellectual and moral faculties,—faculties which assuredly have not been given him to remain in eternal lethargy?

Is man degraded by being removed from a state the most inorganic, so to speak, and raised to a state of the highest spiritualism which it is possible for him to reach?

To enunciate the problem in this form is to resolve it.

I willingly grant, that when wealth is acquired by means which are immoral, it has an immoral influence, as among the Romans.

I also allow that when it is developed in a very unequal manner, creating a great gulf between classes, it has an immoral influence, and gives rise to revolutionary passions.

But does the same thing hold when wealth is the fruit of honest industry and free transactions, and is uniformly distributed over all classes? That would be a doctrine which it is impossible to maintain.

Socialist works, nevertheless, are crammed with declamations against the rich.

I really cannot comprehend how these schools, so opposite in other respects, but so unanimous in this, should not perceive the contradiction into which they fall.

On the one hand, wealth, according to the leaders of these schools, has a deleterious and demoralizing action, which debases the soul, hardens the heart, and leaves behind only a taste for depraved enjoyments. The rich have all manner of vices. The poor have all manner of virtues—they are just, sensible, disinterested, generous,—such is the favourite theme of these authors.

On the other hand, all the efforts of the Socialists' imagination, all the systems they invent, all the laws they wish to impose upon us, tend, if we are to believe them, to convert poverty into riches. . . . .

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